THE MAID OF SKER

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THE

MAID OF SKER

BY

R. D. BLACKMORE

AUTHOR OF

'LORNA DOONE,' 'CLARA VAUGHAN,' AND 'CRADOCK NOWELL'

IN THREE VOLUMES

VOL. II.

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THE MAID OF SKER.

CHAPTER XXVII.

A FINE SPECTACLE.

We brought the Rose of Devon to her moorings on the south side of the river, about two miles short of Barnstaple, where a little bend and creek is, and a place for barges, and "Deadman's Pill" was the name of it. What could a dead man want with a pill, was the very first thing I asked them; but they said that was no concern of theirs; there were pills up and down the river for miles, as well as a town called Pill-town. The cleverest man that I came across said that it must be by reason of piles driven in where the corners were to prevent the washing, and he showed me some piles, or their stumps, to prove it, and defied all further argument. For the time I was

beaten, until of a sudden, and too late to let him know, I saw like a stupid that it must be no other than our own word "Pwyl," which differs much from an English "pool," because it may be either dry or wet, so long as it lies in a hollow. And with that I fell a-thinking of poor Bardie and Pwyl Tavan. To be quit of remorse, and to see the world, I accepted old Ikey's invitation to Barnstaple fair for the very next day. We could not begin to discharge our lime-stone, as even that obstinate Fuzzy confessed, upon a sacred day like that. Fuzzy himself had a mind for going, as we half suspected, although he held his tongue about it; and my under-mate told me to let him alone, and see what would come of it.

The town is a pleasant and pretty one, and has always been famous for thinking itself more noble than any other; also the fair was a fine thing to see, full of people, and full of noise, and most outrageous dialect; everbody in fine broad humour, and no fighting worth even looking at. This disappointed me; for in Wales we consider the off-day market a poor one, unless at least some of the women pull caps. I tried, however, not to miss it, having seen in foreign countries people meeting peaceably. Of this I could have had no intention to complain to poor Ikey Hutchings. However, he took it as if I

had, and offered to find me a man from Bratton, or himself, to have a square with me, and stake half-a-crown upon it. He must have found early cause for repentance, if I had taken him at his word; but every one would have cried shame upon me against such a poor little fellow. And so we pushed on, and the people pushed us.

After a little more of this, and Ikey bragging all the time, though I saw nothing very wonderful, we turned the corner of a narrow street, and opened into a broader one. Here there seemed to be no bullocks, such as had made us keep springs on our cables, but a very amazing lot of horses, trotting about, and parading, and rushing, most of them with their tails upholsted, as if by discharging tackle. Among them stood men, making much of their virtues, and sinking their faults (if they had any), and cracking a whip every now and then, with a style of applause toward them.

Now I have a natural love of the horse, though I never served long on board of one; and I regularly feel, at sight of them, a desire to mount the rigging. Many a time I have reasoned to my own conviction and my neighbours', that a man who can stand on the mizzen-top-gallant yard in a heavy gale of wind, must find it a ridiculously easy thing to hold on

by a horse with the tackle to help him, and very likely a dead calm all round. Nevertheless, somehow or other, the result seems always otherwise.

I had just hailed a man with a colt to show off, and commodore's pendants all over his tail, and was keeping clear of his counter to catch the rise of the wave for boarding him, when a hush came over all hands as if the street had been raked with chain-shot. And on both sides of the street all people fell back and backed their horses, so that all the roadway stood as clear as if the fair had turned into a Sunday morning.

Up the centre, and heeding the people no more than they would two rows of trees, came two grave gentlemen, daintily walking arm in arm, and dressed in black. They had broad-flapped hats, long coats of broadcloth, black silk tunics, and buckled breeches, and black polished boots reaching up to the buckles.

Meanwhile, all the people stood huddled together upon the pitched stones on either side, touching their hats, and scarce whispering, and even the showing off of the horses went into the side-streets.

After all the bowing and legging that I had beheld in the Royal Navy, the double file, the noble salutes, the manning of the sides and yards, the drums, the oars all upon the catch, and all the other glorious

things that fit us to thrash the Frenchmen so, there was nothing else left for me to suppose but that here were two mighty admirals, gone into mourning very likely for the loss of the Royal George, or come on the sly perhaps to enjoy the rollicking of the fair, and sinking the uniform for variety. How could I tell, and least of all would I think of interfering with the pleasure of my betters; therefore I stopped in my throat the cheer (which naturally seemed to rise the moment I took my hat off), for fear of letting the common people know that I understood their Honours. But after looking again so long as one might without being inquisitive, I saw that neither of these great men could walk the deck in a rolling sea.

I had been so bold in the thick of the horses, that Ikey had found it too much for him always to keep close to me; but now, as the nearest horse must have drifted the length of two jolly-boats away, this little sailor came up and spoke.

"Can 'e show the laikes of they two, in Taffy-land, old Taffy now?"

"Plenty, I should hope," said I (though proud in the end to say "not one"); "but what a fuss you make! Who are they?"

"As if thee didn't know!" cried Ikey, staring with indignation at me.

"How should I know when I never clapped eyes on either of them till this moment?"

"Thou hast crossed the water for something then, Davy. Them be the two Passons!"

"Two Passons!" I could not say it exactly as he sounded it. "I never heard of two Passons."

"'A wants to draive me mad, 'a dooth," said Ikey, in self-commune: "Did 'e never hear tell of Passon Chowne, and Passon Jack, man alive now?"

It was hopeless to try any more with him, for I could not ding into his stupid head the possibility of such ignorance. He could only believe that I feigned it for the purpose of driving him out of his senses, or making little of his native land. So I felt that the best thing I could do was to look at these two great gentlemen accurately and impartially, and thus form my own opinion. Hence there was prospect of further pleasure, in coming to know more about them.

Verily they were goodly men, so far as the outer frame goes; the one for size, and strength, and stature—and the other for face, form, and quickness. I felt as surely as men do feel, who have dealed much among other men, that I was gazing upon two faces not of the common order. And they walked as if they knew themselves to be ever so far from the average. Not so much with pride, or conceit, or any

sort of arrogance, but with a manner of going distinct from the going of fellow-creatures. Whether this may have been so, because they were both going straight to the devil, is a question that never crossed my mind, until I knew more about them. For our parsons in Wales, take them all in all, can hardly be called gentlemen; except, of course, our own, who was Colonel Lougher's brother, also the one at Merthyr Mawr, and St Brides, and one or two other places where they were customers of mine; but most of the rest were small farmers' sons, or shopkeepers' boys, and so on. These may do very well for a parish, or even a congregation that never sees a gentleman (except when they are summoned—and not always then); however, this sort will not do for a man who has served, ay, and been in battle, under two baronets and an earl.

Therefore I looked with some misgiving at these two great parsons; but it did not take me long to perceive that each of them was of good birth at least, whatever his manners afterwards,—men who must feel themselves out of their rank when buttoned into a pulpit for reasoning with Devonshire plough-tail Bobs, if indeed they ever did so; and as for their flocks, they kept dogs enough at any rate to look after them. For they both kept hounds; and both

served their Churches in true hunting fashion—that is to say, with a steeplechase, taking the country at full gallop over hedges and ditches, and stabling the horse in the vestry. All this I did not know as yet, or I must have thought even more than I did concerning those two gentlemen. The taller of the two was as fair and ruddy, and as free of countenance, as a June rose in the sunshine; a man of commanding build and figure, but with no other command about him, and least of all, that of his own self. The other it was that took my gaze, and held it, having caught mine eyes, until I forgot myself, and dropped them under some superior strength. For the time, I knew not how I felt, or what it was that vanquished me; only that my spirit owned this man's to be its master. Whether from excess of goodness, or from depth of desperate evil, at the time I knew not.

It was the most wondrous unfathomable face that ever fellow-man fixed gaze upon; lost to mankindliness, lost to mercy, lost to all memory of God. As handsome a face as need be seen, with a very strong forehead and coal-black eyes, a straight white nose, and a sharp-cut mouth, and the chin like a marble sculpture. Disdain was the first thing it gave one to think of; and after that, cold relentless humour; and after that, anything dark and bad.

Meanwhile this was a very handsome man, as women reckon beauty; and his age not over forty, perhaps; also of good average stature, active and elegant form, and so on. Neither years nor cubits make much odds to a man of that sort; and the ladies pronounce him perfect.

When these two were gone by, I was able to gaze again at the taller one. Truly a goodly man he was, though spared from being a good one. He seemed to stand over me, like Sir Philip; although I was measured for six feet and one inch, before I got into rheumatic ways. And as for size and compass, my parents never could give me food to fetch out my girth, as this parson's was. He looked a good yard and a half round the chest, and his arms were like oak-saplings. However, he proved to be a man void of some pride and some evil desires, unless anybody bore hard on him; and as for reading the collects, or lessons, or even the burial service, I was told that no man in the British realm was fit to say "Amen" to him. This had something to do with the size of his chest, and perhaps might have helped to increase it. His sermons also were done in a style that women would come many miles to enjoy; beginning very soft and sweet, so as to melt the milder ones; and then of a sudden roaring greatly with all the contents of

enormous lungs, so as to ring all round the sides of the strongest weaker vessels. And as for the men, what could they think, when the preacher could drub any six of them?

This was "Parson Jack," if you please, his surname being "Rambone," as I need not say, unless I write for unborn generations. His business in Boutport Street that day was to see if any man would challenge him. He had held the belt seven years, they said, for wrestling, as well as for bruising; the condition whereof was to walk the street both at Barnstaple fair and at Bodmin revels, and watch whether any man laid foot across him.

This he did purely as a layman might. But the boxing and bruising were part of his office, so that he hung up his cassock always for a challenge to make rent in it. There had been some talk of a Cornishman interfering about the wrestling; and bad people hoped that he might so attempt, and never know the way home again; but as for the fighting, the cassock might hang till the beard of Parson Jack was grey, before any one made a hole in it. Also the Cornish wrestler found, after looking at Parson Jack, that the wisest plan before him was to challenge the other Cornishmen, and leave the belt in Devonshire.

All this I found out at a little gathering which was held round the corner, in Bear Street, to reflect upon the business done at the fair, and compare opinions. And although I had never beheld till then any of our good company, neither expected to see them again, there were no two opinions about my being the most agreeable man in the room. I showed them how to make punch to begin with, as had been done by his Royal Highness, with me to declare proportions; and as many of the farmers had turned some money, they bade me think twice about no ingredient that would figure on the bill, even half-a-crown.

By right of superior knowledge, and also as principal guest of the evening, I became voted the chairman, upon the clear understanding that I would do them the honour of paying nothing; and therein I found not a man that would think of evading his duty towards the chair. I entreated them all to be frank, and regard me as if I were born in Barnstaple, which they might look upon as being done otherwise, as the mere turn of a shaving; for my father had been there twice, and my mother more than once thought of trying it. Everybody saw the force of this; and after a very fine supper we grew as genial as could be. And leading them

all with a delicate knowledge of the ins and outs of these natives (many of which I had learned at the fair), and especially by encouraging their bent for contradiction, I heard a good deal of the leading people in the town or out of it. I listened, of course, to a very great deal, which might be of use to me or might not; but my object was, when I could gather in their many-elbowed stories, to be thoroughly up to the mark on three points.

First, about Fuzzy, and most important. Who was he? What was he? Where did he live? Had he got a wife? And if so, why? And if not, more especially, why again? Also, how much money had he, and what in the world did he do with it; and could he have, under the rose, any reason for keeping our women so distant? Particularly, I had orders to know whether he was considered handsome by the Devonshire women. For our women could not make up their minds, and feared to give way to the high opinion engendered by his contempt of them. Only they liked his general hairiness, if it could be warranted not to come off.

Upon this point I learned nothing at all. No man even knew Bethel Jose, or, at any rate, none would own to it, perhaps because Ikey was

there to hearken; so I left that until I should get with the women. My next matter was about Braunton Burrows, and the gentleman of high rank who wandered up and down without telling us why. And I might hereupon have won some knowledge, and was beginning to do so, when a square stout man came in and said "Hush!" and I would gladly have thrown a jug at him. Nevertheless, I did learn something which I mean to tell next to directly.

But as concerned the third question before me (and to myself the most itching of any), satisfaction, to at least half-measure, was by proper skill and fortune brought within my reach almost. And this I must set down at leisure, soberly thinking over it.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

SOMETHING ABOUT HIM.

It was of course not Parson Rambone but the Parson Chowne who aroused my desire of knowledge so strongly. And even here I was met at first by failure and disappointment. The men would only shake their hands and say, "Ah, he is a queer one!" or, "Well, well, we can't expect all folk to be alike, you know;" or even some of the ruder spirits, "You had better go yourself and ask him"—a most absurd suggestion, for never yet had I seen a man less fit to encourage impertinence. Far more ready would I have been to displease even his great comrade, the Reverend John Rambone; and no one who saw them together could doubt which of the two was the master. My true course was clearly to bide my time, and, as chairman, to enhance the goodwill and geniality of the evening. And this I was ready enough to do—ay, and in the vein for

it—bearing in mind the wisdom of enjoying to the utmost such favourable circumstances, to be on the free boot, and well received in a place entirely new to me, where I found myself so much ahead of everybody in matter of mind, and some of them glad to acknowledge it; also where no customer could be waiting to reproach me, nor even a justice of the peace well versed in my countenance; moreover, blessed as I was with a sense of pity for these natives, and a largeness of goodwill to them, such a chance had never crossed me since the day my wife did.

Ikey and I had a good laugh also at that surly Bethel Jose, who had shown himself so much above the fair in mind, yet was there in body. None but Bang, the boy, had been left for captain and crew of the Rose of Devon, and before it was dark we had found Bang shooting, at four shots a-penny, for cocoa-nut slices, with ginger-beer poured over them.

Now fortune stood my friend that night, for before we began to find ourselves in a condition at all uproarious, I managed to loosen the tongues of these natives by means of some excellent stories. Recalling the fame of my grandfather (that long David Llewellyn, who made on his harp three unconquered ballads, and won the first prize at all the Eistedfodds

held during his life for Englynnions), I could not accept it as my business to play second fiddle. Therefore, being in a happy mood, I was enabled to recount such stories as made these Devonshire folk open their mouths like a man at a great rock-oyster, while their experience was in contention with faith and perhaps good manners. And as their nature is obstinate and most unwilling to be outdone, they found themselves driven down at last to tell the most wonderful things they knew, or else to be almost nobodies. And putting aside what their grandfathers might have seen or heard or even done —which is a mistake to dwell upon—all their stories worth curve of the ear were of Parson Chowne, and no other.

For this man was a man, as we say. No other man must have a will that stood across the path of his. If he heard of any one unwilling to give way to him, he would not go to bed until he had taken that arrogance out of him. Many people, and even some of ten times his own fortune, had done their best, one after the other, not to be beaten by him. All of them found that they could not do it, and that their only chance of comfort was to knock under to Parson Chowne. And even after that had been done, he was not always satisfied, but let them know from

time to time their folly in offending him. And most of all, he made a point (as was natural perhaps) of keeping the Lord Bishop of the country under him. Some of these had done their best (before they understood him) to make his habits hold themselves within some stretch of discipline; or, if that could not be hoped, at any rate to keep silent. When he heard of these ideas he was not a little pleased, because he descried a rare chance of sport, and he followed it up with their lordships. The law he knew to its lowest tittle, and while he broke it every day himself, woe to any man who dared to break it against him. And gradually these bishops came (one after the other growing a little alive to what the parsons were) not so much to let him alone as to desire his acquaintance—out of school, if so I may put it, in my ignorance of the bench of bishops. For well as I know a fish called "the Pope," and also a pear said to be "Bishop's thumb," not to mention a grass called "Timothy," it has not been my luck thus far to rise above the bench of magistrates.

"Let be" is the wisest thing one can say; and so everybody said of him, so soon as ever it was acknowledged that he could never be put down. And thus he might have done well enough if he would have been content with this. Only it never was his

nature to be content with anything, which is the only true way to get on; if any one cares for that sort of thing, who knows mankind's great randomness. Because the one who shoves and swears without being too particular, has the best chance to hoist himself upon the backs of the humble. By dint of this, and to keep him quiet, Parson Chowne himself, they said, might have been bishop if so he had chosen. For this he had some fine qualifications, for his very choicest pleasure was found in tormenting his fellow-parsons: and a man of so bold a mind he was, that he believed in nothing except himself.

Even his own servants never knew how to come nigh him. One at the stables would touch his hat, and he would kick him for reply; then another would come without ceremony, and he knocked him down to learn it. Also in the house, the maidens had the same account to give. However much they might think of themselves, and adorn themselves to that estimate, he never was known to do so much as to chuck any one of them under the chin, as they had been at all other places much in the habit of feeling; neither did he make a joke to excuse himself for omitting it. As to that, they would scorn themselves ever to think of permitting it, being young women of high respect, and quite aware how to conduct

themselves. But they might have liked to stop him, and they got no chance of doing it.

All this small-talk almost vexed me more than the content it gave. Every now and then I could see the man in these little corner views, but they did not show me round him so as to get his girth and substance. "Think of the devil," is an old saying; and while I thought of him, in he walked.

At the very first glimpse of him, all those people who had been talking so freely about him shrank away, and said, "Servant, sir!" and looked so foolish more than usual, that he read them with one eye. He had his riding-clothes on now, and it made him look still sharper.

"Talking of me, good people, eh? I hope the subject pleases you. Open your ranks, if you please, and show me whether my groom is behind you." He cracked a great hunting-whip as he spoke, and it seemed a poor prospect for the groom, wherever he might be loitering.

"Plaize your honour, your honour's groom have not been here all day a'most; and if her coom'th, us 'ont keep un."

"In that resolution you are wise. What! you here, Welshman? I marked you to-day. You will come to me by noon to-morrow. Here is for your charges."

He threw on the table two crown-pieces, and was gone before I knew what answer I was bound to make to him. The men, recovering from his presence, ran to the window to watch him as far as the flaring lights of the fair, now spluttering low, displayed him. Without being able to see so much as I strongly desired to see of him, I could not help admiring now his look, and his manner, and strong steady gait, and the general style of his outward man. His free way of going along made clear the excellence of his clothing; and he swung his right elbow, as I was told, from his constant desire to lash a horse. He was the devil himself to ride, so everybody said of him; and Parson Chowne's horse was now become a by-word for any one thoroughly thrashed. And yet no other man must ever dare to touch his horses. If any one did, no deadlier outrage could be put upon him.

Hearing these things from fourteen customers able to express their thoughts, I was sorry when the corner turned upon Parson Chowne, so walking in the light of long deal tables, set with finely-guttering candles, and with goods not quite sold out. And he left upon my memory a vision of a great commander, having a hat of controlling movements, and a riding-coat so shaped that a horse appeared to be under it; and lower down, buff leathern breeches, and boots

well over the hinge of his legs, and silver heels, and silver spurs, and nothing to obscure him. No top-coat or outer style of means to fend the weather, because he could keep it in order always.

"I wish I was like him, then," said I; "and what does he mean by insulting me? I know a hundred bigger fellows. Am I at his beck and call?"

"I warr'n thou wilt be, zoon enough," answered, with a heavy grin, a lout of a fellow, who had shown no more sense than to leave the room at the very crash and crown of one of my best stories; "hast heered what Passon have now a dooed?" He was come in primed with some rubbishing tale, and wanted the room to make much of him. Nevertheless, the men of perception had not done with me yet.

"Wuttever be un? wuttever be un? Spak up, Oasler Jan!" cried some of the altogether younger men, who never know good work from bad, but seek some new astonishment. Goodness knows how hard it was, and how wholly undeserved, for me to withdraw and let them talk, only because their news was newer, and about a favourite man to talk of. However, I pressed down my feelings, not being certain about my bill, if I offended any one. For mercy's sake I spare their brogue, and tell their story decently.

And Ostler John's tale was as follows, so far as I could make it out, by means of good luck, and by watching his face.

A certain justice of the peace, whose name was Captain Vellacott, a gentleman of spirit, who lived in one of the parishes belonging to this Parson Chowne (who happened to have two churches), this gentleman had contrived to give, as almost every one managed to do, deadly offence to Parson Chowne. It was expected that the Parson would be content to have him down and horsewhip him (as his manner was), and burn his house down afterwards. But the people who thought this were too hasty, and understood not his reverence. Whether from dislike of sitting upon the bench with him afterwards, or whether because Mrs Vellacott also had dared to shake hands with her gauntlet on, or because the baby cried when offered up to kiss the Parson—at any rate, Captain Vellacott must have more than a simple chastisement. The Captain, being a quick sharp man, who said a hot word and forgot it, laughed at every one who told him to see to himself; and so on. "The Parson," said he, "is a man of his cloth; so am I of mine; and I will not insult him by expecting insult." So it came to pass that he made the mistake of measuring another man by his own measure.

After a few months this gentleman felt that the Parson had quite forgiven him, no evil having befallen him yet, except that his rickyard had twice been fired, and his wife insulted by the naked people whom Chowne maintained upon Nympton Moor. And so, when they met in the fair this day, the Captain bowed to the Parson, and meant to go on and see to his business. But the other would not have it so. He offered his hand most cordially, and asked how Mrs Vellacott was, and all the five children, according to ages, using the Christian name of each. Captain Vellacott was so pleased by the kindness of his memory, and the nobility shown in dropping whatever had been between them, that what did he do but invite Master Chowne to dine with him up at the Fortescue Arms Hotel, and see a young horse he had bought in the fair, giving his own for it and five guineas; for he was not a rich man at all, and was come to make a moderate bargain.

Everything might have gone on well, and perhaps the Parson really meant to forgive him at the moment for having dared, in the bygone matter, to have a will of his own almost. But, as bad luck would have it, this very horse that the Captain had bought turned out to be one which the Parson had eye upon ever since last year's hunting season.

However, not to paint the devil too black, it was confessed that he offered Vellacott five pounds for his bargain. This ought to have satisfied any man who knew what Parson Chowne was, and that fifty times five pounds would be saved by keeping out of his black books. Nevertheless the Captain stuck to his bargain and ruined himself.

The two gentlemen parted very good friends, shaking hands warmly, and having their joke, and hoping to dine again soon together; for Parson Chowne could beat all the world at after-dinner stories; and the Captain was the best man to laugh anywhere round the neighbourhood. And so he started rather early, on purpose to show his new horse to his wife.

But the ostler, who was a very old codger, and had seen a little of Parson's ways, shook his head after the Captain's shilling, and spat upon it to prevent bad luck, and laid it on the shelf where he kept his blacking. He was too clever to say one word; but every one remembered how he had behaved, and the sigh he gave—when he reminded them.

It may have been half an hour afterwards, or it may have been an hour and a half (so much these people differed), when Captain Vellacott on a hurdle

came to Surgeon Cutcliffe's door, and the horse was led to Farrier Gould, who sent him to the mayor for opinions, and his worship sent him on to Pilch of the knacker's yard. Poor Justice Vellacott's collar bone was snapped in two places, and his left thigh broken, also three of his ribs stoven in, and a good deal of breakage abroad in his head. However, they hoped that he might come round; and being a Devonshire man, he did, as I found out afterwards.

This tale, which Ostler John delivered at ten times the length of the above, caused a very great stir and excitement and comparison of opinions. And when these wiseacres had almost exhausted their powers of wonder, I desired to know, in the name of goodness, why the poor Parson must be saddled with every man who fell off his horse. In the first place, he must have been far away from the scene of the misfortune, inasmuch as no more than an hour ago he was seeking his groom amongst us. And, again, what could be more likely than that Captain Vellacott might have taken, with a view to good luck for his purchase, a bottle or two of wine beyond what otherwise would have contented him? And even if not—why, a horse might fall, much more a man (who has only two legs), without anybody having designed it.

This reasoning of mine made no impression, be-

cause everybody's opinion was set. "Passon Chowne had adooed it;" they scratched their heads and went into side questions, but on the main point all agreed—"'twor ayther the Passon or the devil himzell."

CHAPTER XXIX.

A VISIT TO A PARSON.

My opinion of Devonshire now grew fast that most of the people are mad there. Honest, respectable, very kind-hearted, shrewd at a bargain, yet trustful, simple, manly, and outspoken, nevertheless they must be mad to keep Parson Chowne among them. But here, as in one or two other matters, I found myself wrong ere I finished with it. If a man visits a strange country, he ought to take time to think about it, and not judge the natives by first appearance, however superior he may be. This I felt even then, and tried my very best to act up to it: nevertheless it came back on me always that in the large county of Devon there were only two sound people; Parson Chowne for the one—and, of course, for the other, Davy Llewellyn.

So I resolved to see this thing out, especially as (when I came to think) nothing could be clearer than

that the Parson himself had descried and taken me (with his wonderful quickness) for the only intelligent man to be found. How he knew me to be a Welshman, I could not tell then, and am not sure now. It must have been because I looked so superior to the rest of them. I gazed at the two crown-pieces, when I came to be active again the next day; and finding them both very good, I determined to keep them, and go to see after some more. But if I thought to have got the right side of the bargain, so far as the money went, I reckoned amiss considerably; for I found that the Parson lived so far away, that I could not walk thither and back again without being footsore for a week; and Captain Fuzzy would not allow it, especially as he had bound me to help in discharging cargo. And being quite ignorant as to the road, to hire a horse would not avail me, even supposing I could stay on board of him, which was against all experience. And by the time I had hired a cart to take me to Nympton on the Moors, as well as a hand to pilot her, behold I was on the wrong side of my two crowns, without any allowance for rations. They told me that everybody always charged double price for going up to the Parson's, and even so did not care for the job much. Because, though it was possible to come back safe, there was a poor chance

of doing so without some damage to man or beast, and perhaps to the vehicle also.

Hereupon I had a great mind not to go; but being assured upon all sides that this would be a most dangerous thing, as well as supported, perhaps, by my native resolution and habits of inquiry, I nailed my colours to the mast, and mounted the cart by the larboard slings. It was a long and tiresome journey, quite up into a wilderness; and, for the latter part of it, the track could not have been found, except by means of a rough stone flung down here and there. But the driver told me that Parson Chowne took the whole of it three times a-week at a gallop, not being able to live without more harm than this lonely place afforded. Finding this fellow more ahead of his wits than most of those Devonshire yokels are, I beguiled the long journey by letting him talk, and now and then putting a question to him. He was full, of course, like all the town, of poor Captain Vellacott's misadventure, and the terrible spell put upon his new horse, which had seemed in the morning so quiet and docile. This he pretended at first to explain as the result of a compact formed some years back between his reverence and the devil. For Parson Chowne had thoroughly startled and robbed the latter of all self-esteem, until he had given in, and

contracted to be at his beck and call (like a good servant) until it should come to the settlement. And poor Parson Jack was to be thrown in, though not such a very bad man sometimes; it being thoroughly understood, though not expressed between them, that Parson Chowne was to lead him on, step by step, with his own pilgrimage.

All this I listened to very quietly, scarce knowing what to say about it. However, I asked the driver, as a man having intimate knowledge of horses, whether he really did believe that they (like the swine of the Gadarenes) were laid open to infection from even a man with seven devils in him; and the more so as these had been never cast out, according to all that appeared of him. At this he cracked his whip and thought, not being much at theology; and not having met, it may be, until now, a man so thoroughly versed in it. I gave him his time to consider it out; but the trouble seemed only to grow on him, until he laid down his whip and said, not being able to do any more, "Horses is horses, and pigs is pigs, every bit the same as men be men. If the Lord made 'em both, the devil had the right to take 'em both."

This was so sound in point of reasoning, as well as of what we do hear in church, that never another word could I say, being taken in my own shallowness.

And this is the only thing that can happen to a fellow too fond of objections. However, the driver, perceiving now that he had been too much for me, was pleased with me, and became disposed to make it up by a freedom of further information. If I were to put this in his own words, who could make head or tail of it? And indeed I could not stoop my pen to write such outlandish language. He said that his cousin was the very same knacker who had slaughtered that poor horse last night, to put it out of misery. Having an order from the mayor, "Putt thiss here hannimall to deth," he did it, and thought no more about it, until he got up in the morning. Then, as no boiling was yet on hand, he went to look at this fine young horse, whose time had been so hastened. And the brains being always so valuable for mixing with fresh—but I will not tell for the sake of honour—it was natural that he should look at the head of this poor creature. Finding the eyes in a strange condition, he examined them carefully, and, lifting the lids and probing round, in each he found a berry. My coachman said that his cousin now took these two berries which he had thus discovered out of a new horn-box, in which he had placed them for certainty, and asked him to make out what they were. The knacker, for his part, believed that they

came from a creeping plant called the "Bitter-sweet nightshade," or sometimes the "Lady's necklace." But his cousin, my coachman, thought otherwise. He had wandered a good deal about in the fields before he married his young woman; and there he had seen, in autumnal days, the very same things as had killed the poor horse. A red thing that sticks in a cloven pod, much harder than berries of nightshade, and likely to keep in its poison until the moisture and warmth should dissolve its skin. I knew what he meant after thinking a while, because when a child I had gathered them. It is the seed of a nasty flag, which some call the "Roast-beef plant," and others the "Stinking Iris." These poisonous things in the eyes of a horse, cleverly pushed in under the lids, heating and melting, according as the heating and working of muscles crushed them; then shooting their red fire over the agonised tissues of eyeballs,—what horse would not have gone mad with it?

Also finding so rare a chance of a Devonshire man who was not dumb, I took opportunity of going into the matter of that fine old gentleman, whose strange and unreasonable habit of seeking among those Braunton Burrows (as if for somebody buried there) had almost broken my rest ever since, till I stumbled on yet greater wonders. Coachman,

however, knew nothing about it, or else was not going to tell too much, and took a sudden turn of beginning to think that I asked too many questions, without even an inn to stand treat at. And perhaps he found out, with the jerks of the cart, that I had a very small phial of rum, not enough for two people to think of.

He may have been bidding for that, with his news; if so, he made a great mistake. Not that I ever grudge anything; only that there was not half enough for myself under the trying circumstances, and the man should have shown better manners than ever to cast even half an eye on it.

At last we were forced, on the brow of a hill, to come to a mooring in a fine old ditch, not having even a wall, or a tree, or a rick of peat to shelter us. And half a mile away round the corner might be found (as the driver said) the rectory-house of Parson Chowne. Neither horse nor man would budge so much as a yard more in that direction, and it took a great deal to make them promise to wait there till two of the clock for me. But I had sense enough to pay nothing until they should carry me home again. Still I could not feel quite sure how far their courage would hold out in a lonely place, and so unkid.

And even with all that I feel within me of royal blood from royal bards—which must be the highest form of it—I did not feel myself so wholly comfortable and relishing as my duty is towards dinner-time. Nevertheless I plucked up courage, and went round the corner. Here I found a sort of a road with fir-trees on each side of it, all blown one way by strong storms, and unable to get back again. The road lay not in a hollow exactly, but in a shallow trough of the hills, which these fir-trees were meant to fill up, if the wind would allow them occasion. And going between them I felt the want of the pole I had left behind me. And if I had happened to own a gold watch, or anything fit to breed enemies, the knowledge of my price would have kept me from such temptation of Providence.

A tremendous roaring of dogs broke upon me the moment I got the first glimpse of the house; and this obliged me to go on carefully, because of that race I have had too much, and never found them mannersome. One huge fellow rushed up to me, and disturbed my mind to so great a degree that I was unable to take heed of anything about the place except his savage eyes and highly alarming expression and manner. For he kept on showing his horrible tusks, and growling a deep growl broken

with snarls, and sidling to and fro, so as to get the better chance of a dash at me; and I durst not take my eyes from his, or his fangs would have been in my throat at a spring. I called him every endearing name that I could lay my tongue to, and lavished upon him such admiration as might have melted the sternest heart; but he placed no faith in a word of it, and nothing except my determined gaze kept him at bay for a moment. Therefore I felt for my sailor's knife, which luckily hung by a string from my belt; and if he had leaped at me he would have had it, as sure as my name is Llewellyn; and few men, I think, would find fault with me for doing my best to defend myself. However, one man did, for a stern voice cried—

"Shut your knife, you scoundrel! Poor Sammy, did the villain threaten you?"

Sammy crouched, and fawned, and whimpered, and went on his belly to lick his master, while I wiped the perspiration of my fright beneath my hat.

"This is a nice way to begin," said Chowne, after giving his dog a kick, "to come here and draw a knife on my very best dog. Go down on your knees, sir, and beg Sammy's pardon."

"May it please your reverence," I replied, in

spite of his eyes, which lay fiercer upon me than even those of the dog had done, "I would have cut his throat; and I will, if he dares to touch me."

"That would grieve me, my good Welshman, because I should then let loose the pack, and we might have to bury you. However, no more of this trifle. Go in to my housekeeper, and recover your nerves a little, and in half an hour come to my study."

I touched my hat and obeyed his order, following the track which he pointed out, but keeping still ready for action if any more dogs should bear down on me. However, I met no creature worse than a very morose old woman, who merely grunted in reply to the very best flourish I could contrive, and led me into a long low kitchen. Dinner-time for the common people being now at maturity, I expected to see all the servants of course, and to smell something decent and gratifying. However, there was no such luck, only, without even asking my taste, she gave me a small jug of sour ale, and the bottom of a loaf, and a bit of Dutch cheese. Of course this was good enough for me; and having an appetite after the ride, I felt truly grateful. However, I could not help feeling also that in the cupboard just over my elbow there lay a fillet of fine spiced beef, to which I have always been partial.

And after the perils I had encountered, the least she could do was to offer it down. Anywhere else I might have taken the liberty of suggesting this, but in that house I durst not, further than to ask very delicately—

"Madam, it is early for great people; but has his reverence been pleased to dine?"

"Did he give you leave to ask, sir?"

"No, I cannot say that he did. I meant no offence; but only——"

"I mean no offence; but only, you must be a stranger to think of asking a question in this house without his leave."

Nothing could have been said to me more thoroughly grievous and oppressive. And she offered no line or opening for me to begin again, as cross women generally do, by not being satisfied with their sting. So I made the best of my bread-and-cheese, and thought that Sker House was a paradise compared to Nympton Rectory.

"It is time for you now to go to my master," she broke in with her cold harsh voice, before I had scraped all the rind of my cheese, and when I was looking for more sour beer.

"Very well," I replied; "there is no temptation of any sort, madam, to linger here."

She smiled, for the first time, a very tart smile, even worse than the flavour of that shrewd ale, but without its weakness. And then she pointed up some steps, and along a stone passage, and said, exactly as if she took me for no more than a common tramp—

"At the end of that passage turn to the left, and knock at the third door round the corner. You dare not lay hands on anything. My master will know it if you do."

This was a little too much for me, after all the insults I had now put up with. I turned and gazed full on her strange square face, and into the depth of her narrow black eyes, with a glimpse of the window showing them

"Your master!" I said. "Your son, you mean! And much there is to choose between you!"

She did not betray any signs of surprise at this hap-hazard shot of mine, but coldly answered my gaze, and said—

"You are very insolent. Let me give you a warning. You seem to be a powerful man: in the hands of my master you would be a babe, although you are so much larger. And were I to tell him what you have said, there would not be a sound piece of skin on you. Now, let me hear no more of you."

"With the greatest pleasure, madam. I am sure I can't understand whatever could bring me here."

"But I can;" she answered, more to her own thoughts than to mine, as she shut the door quite on my heels, and left me to my own devices. I felt almost as much amiss as if I were in an evil dream of being chased through caves of rock by some of my very best customers, all bearing red-hot toasting-forks, and pelting me with my own good fish. It is the very worst dream I have, and it never comes after a common supper; which proves how clear my conscience is. And even now I might have escaped, because there were side passages; and for a minute I stood in doubt, until there came into my mind the tales of the pack of hounds he kept, and two or three people torn to pieces, and nobody daring to interfere. Also, I wanted to see him again, for he beat everybody I had ever seen; and I longed to be able to describe him to a civilised audience at the "Jolly Sailors." Therefore I knocked at the door of his room, approaching it very carefully, and thanking the Lord for His last great mercy in having put my knife into my head.

"You may come in," was the answer I got at last; and so in I went; and a queerer room I never did go into. But wonderful as the room was surely, and

leaving on memory a shade of half-seen wonders afterwards, for the time I had no power to look at anything but the man.

People may laugh (and they always do until they gain experience) at the idea of one man binding other men prisoners to his will. For all their laughing, there stands the truth; and the men who resist such influence best are those who do not laugh at it. I have seen too much of the tricks of the world to believe in anything supernatural; but the granting of this power is most strictly within nature's scope; and somebody must have it. One man has the gift of love, that everybody loves him; another has the gift of hate, that nobody comes near him; the third, and far the rarest gift, combines the two others (one more, one less), and adds to them both the gift of fear. I felt, as I tried to meet his gaze and found my eyes quiver away from it, that the further I kept from this man's sight, the better it would be for me.

He sat in a high-backed chair, and pointed to a three-legged stool, as much as to say, "You may even sit down." This I did, and waited for him.

"Your name is David Llewellyn," he said, caring no more to look at me; "you came from the coast of Glamorgan, three days ago, in the Rose of Devon schooner."

"Ketch, your reverence, if you please. The difference is in the mizzen-mast."

"Well, Jack Ketch, if you like, sir. No more interrupting me. Now you will answer a few questions; and if you tell me one word of falsehood——"

He did not finish his sentence, but he frightened me far more than if he had. I promised to do my best to tell the truth, so far as lies in me.

"Do you know what child that was that came ashore drowned upon your coast, when the coroner made such a fool of himself?"

"And the jury as well, your reverence. About the child I know nothing at all."

"Describe that child to the best of your power: for you are not altogether a fool."

I told him what the poor babe was like, so far as I could remember it. But something holy and harmless kept me from saying one word about Bardie. And to the last day of my life I shall rejoice that I so behaved. He saw that I was speaking truth; but he showed no signs of joy or sorrow, until I ventured to put in—

"May I ask why your reverence wishes to know, and what you think of this matter, and how——"

"Certainly you may ask, Llewellyn; it is a woman's

and a Welshman's privilege; but certainly you shall have no reply. What inquiry has been made along your coast about this affair?"

I longed to answer him in my humour, even as he had answered me. With any one else I could have done it, but I durst not so with him. Therefore I told him all the truth, to the utmost of my knowledge,—making no secret of Hezekiah, and his low curiosity; also the man of the press with the hat; and then I could not quite leave out the visit of Anthony Stew and Sir Philip.

This more than anything else aroused Parson Chowne's attention. For the papers he cared not a damn, he said; for two of them lived by abusing him; but as he swore not (except that once), it appeared to me that he did care. However, he pressed me most close and hard about Anthony Stew and Sir Philip.

When he had got from me all that I knew—except that he never once hit upon Bardie (the heart and the jewel of everything), he asked me without any warning—

"Do you know who that Sir Philip is?"

"No, your reverence; I have not even heard so much as his surname, although, no doubt, I shall find out."

"You fool! Is that all the wit you have? Three days in and out of Barnstaple! It is Sir Philip Bampfylde of Narnton Court, close by you."

"There is no Narnton Court, that I know of, your reverence, anywhere round our neighbourhood. There is Candleston Court, and Court Ysha, and Court——"

"Tush, I mean near where your ship is lying. And that is chiefly what I want with you. I know men well; and I know that you are a man that will do anything for money."

My breath was taken away at this: so far was it from my true character. I like money well enough in its way; but as for a single disgraceful action——

"Your reverence never made such a mistake. For coming up here I have even paid more than you were pleased to give me. If that is your point, I will go straight back. Do anything, indeed, for money!"

"Pooh! This is excellent indignation. What man is there but will do so? I mean, of course, anything you consider to be right and virtuous."

"Anything which is undeniably right, and upright, and virtuous. Ah! now your reverence understands me. Such has always been my character."

"In your own opinion. Well, self-respect is a real blessing: I will not ask you to forego it. Your business will be of a nature congenial as well as interesting to you. Your ship lies just in the right position for the service I require; and as she is known to have come from Wales, no Revenue-men will trouble you. You will have to keep watch, both day and night, upon Sir Philip and Narnton Court."

"Nothing in the nature of spying, your reverence, or sneaking after servants, or underhand work——"

"Nothing at all of that sort. You have nothing to do but to use your eyes upon the river-front of the building, especially the landing-place. You will come and tell me as soon as ever you see any kind of boat or vessel either come to or leave the landing-place. Also, if any man with a trumpet hails either boat or vessel. In short, any kind of communication betwixt Narnton Court and the river. You need not take any trouble, except when the tide is up the river."

"Am I to do this against Sir Philip, who has been so kind and good to me? If so, I will hear no more of it."

"Not so; it is for Sir Philip's good. He is in danger, and very obstinate. He stupidly meddles with politics. My object is to save him."

"I see what your reverence means," I answered,

being greatly relieved by this; for then (and even to this day, I believe) many of the ancient families were not content with his gracious Majesty, but hankered after ungracious Stuarts, mainly because they could not get them. "I will do my best to oblige you, sir." I finished, and made a bow to him.

"To obey me, you mean. Of course you will. But remember one thing—you are not to dare to ask a single word about this family, or even mention Sir Philip's name to anybody except myself. I have good reason for this order. If you break it I shall know it, and turn you to stone immediately. You are aware that I possess that power."

"Please your reverence, I have heard so; and I would gladly see it done—not to myself as yet, but rather to that old woman in the kitchen. It could not make much difference to her."

"Keep your position, sir," he answered, in a tone which frightened me; it was not violent, but so deep. "And now for your scale of wages. Of course, being opposite that old house, you would watch it without any orders. The only trouble I give you is this—when the tide runs up after dark, and smooth water lets vessels over the bar, you will have to loosen your boat or dingy, punt, or whatever you call her, and pull across the river, and lie in a shaded corner which

you will find below Narnton Court, and commanding a view of it. Have you firearms? Then take this. The stock is hollow, and contains six charges. You can shoot; I am sure of that. I know a poacher by his eyelids."

He gave me a heavy two-barrelled pistol, long enough for a gun almost, and meant to be fired from the shoulder. Then pressing a spring in the stock, he laid bare a chamber containing some ammunition, as well as a couple of spare flints. He was going to teach me how to load it, till I told him that I had been captain of cannon, and perhaps the best shot in the royal navy.

"Then don't shoot yourself," he said, "as most of the old sailors have reason to do. But now you will earn your living well, what with your wages on board the schooner, and the crown a-week I shall give you."

"A crown a-week, your reverence!" My countenance must have fallen sadly; for I looked to a guinea a-week at least. "And to have to stay out of my bed like that!"

"It is a large sum, I know, Llewellyn. But you must do your best to earn it, by diligence and alacrity. I could have sent one of my fine naked fellows, and of course not have paid him anything. But the fools near the towns are so fidgety now that they

stare at these honest Adamites, and talk of them—which would defeat my purpose. Be off with you! I must go and see them. Nothing else refreshes me after talking so long to a fellow like you. Here are two guineas for you—one in advance for your first month's wage; the other you will keep until I have done with you, and then return it to me."

"A month, your honour!" I cried in dismay. "I never could stop in this country a month. Why, a week of it would be enough to drive me out of my mind almost."

"You will stay as long as I please, Llewellyn. That second guinea, which you pouched so promptly, is to enable you to come to me, by day or by night, on the very moment you see anything worth reporting. You are afraid of the dogs? Yes, all rogues are. Here, take this whistle. They are trained to obey it—they will crouch and fawn to you when you blow it." He gave me a few more minute instructions, and then showed me out by a little side-door; and all the way back such a weight was upon me, and continual presence of strange black eyes, and dread of some hovering danger, that I answered the driver to never a word, nor cared for any of his wondrous stories about the naked people (whose huts we beheld in a valley below us); nay, not even—though truly

needing it, and to my own great amazement—could I manage a drop of my pittance of rum. So the driver got it after all, or at least whatever remained of it, while I wished myself back at Old Newton Nottage, and seemed to be wrapped in an evil dream. Both horse and driver, however, found themselves not only thankful, but light-hearted, at getting away from Nympton Moor. Jack even sang a song when five miles off, and in his clumsy way rallied me. But finding this useless, he said that it was no more than he had expected; because it was known that it always befell every man who forgot his baptism, and got into dealings with Parson Chowne.

CHAPTER XXX.

ON DUTY.

THERE are many people who cannot enter into my meaning altogether. This I have felt so often that now I may have given utterance to it once or possibly twice before. If so, you will find me consistent wholly, and quite prepared to abide by it. In all substantial things I am clearer than the noon-day sun itself; and, to the very utmost farthing, righteous and unimpeachable. Money I look at, now and then, when it comes across me; and I like it well enough for the sake of the things it goes for. But as for committing an action below the honour of my family and ancestors (who never tuned their harps for less than a mark a-night), also, and best of all, my own conscience—a power that thumps all night like a ghost if I have not strictly humoured it,—for me to talk of such things seems almost to degrade the whole of them.

Therefore, if any one dreams, in his folly, that I would play the spy upon that great house over the river, I have no more to say, except that he is not worthy to read my tale. I regard him with contempt, and loathe him for his vile insinuations. Such a man is only fit to take the place of a spy himself, and earn perhaps something worth talking of, if his interest let him talk of it. For taking friendly observation of Narnton Court, for its inmates' sake, I was to have just five shillings a-week!

It became my duty now to attend to the getting out of the limestone; and I fetched it up with a swing that shook every leaf of the Rose of Devon. Fuzzy attempted to govern me; but I let him know that I would not have it, and never knocked under to any man. And if Parson Chowne had come alongside, I would have said the same to him.

Nevertheless, as an honest man, I took good care to earn my money, though less than the value of one good sewin, or at any rate of a fine turbot, each week. No craft of any sort went up or down that blessed river without my laying perspective on her, if there chanced to be light enough; or if she slipped along after dark—which is not worth while to do, on account of the shoals and windings—there was I, in our little dingy, not so far off as they might imagine. And I

could answer for it, even with disdainful Chowne looking down through me, that nothing larger than a row-boat could have made for Narnton Court. But I have not said much of the river as yet; and who can understand me?

This river bends in graceful courtesies to the sweet land it is leaving, and the hills that hold its birth. Also with a vein of terror at the unknown sea before it, back it comes, when you grieve to think that it must have said "good-bye" for ever. Such a lovely winding river, with so many wilful ways, silvery shallows, and deep, rich shadows, where the trees come down to drink; also, beautiful bright-green meadows, sloping to have a taste of it, and the pleaches of bright sand offered to satisfy the tide, and the dark points jutting out on purpose to protect it! Many rivers have I seen, nobler, grander, more determined, yet among them all not one that took and led my heart so.

Had I been born on its banks, or among the hills that gaze down over it, what a song I would have made to it!—although the Bardic inspiration seems to have dropped out of my generation, yet will it return with fourfold vigour, probably in Bunny's children, if she ever has any, that is to say, of the proper gender; for the thumb of a woman is weak on the

harp. And Bunny's only aspiration is for ribbons and lollipops, which must be beaten out of her.

However, my principal business now was not to admire this river, but watch it; and sometimes I found it uncommonly cold, and would gladly have had quite an ugly river, if less attractive to white frosts. And what with the clearing of our cargo, and the grumbling afterwards, and the waiting for sailing-orders, and never getting any, and the setting-in of a sudden gale (which, but for me, must have capsized us when her hold was empty), as well as some more delays which now I cannot stop to think of—the middle of October found us still made fast, by stem and stern, in Barnstaple river, at Deadman's Pill.

Parson Chowne (who never happened to neglect a single thing that did concern his interests, any more than he ever happened to forget an injury), twice or thrice a-week he came, mounted on his coal-black mare, to know what was going on with us. I saw—for I am pretty sharp, though not pretending to vie with him, as no man might who had not dealt in a wholesale mode with the devil—I saw (though the clumsy understrappers meant me not to notice it) that Bethel Jose, our captain, was no more than a slave of the Parson's. This made clear to me quite

a lump of what had seemed hopeless mysteries. Touching my poor self, to begin with, Chowne knew all about me, of course, by means of this dirty Fuzzy. Also Fuzzy's silence now, and the difficulty of working him (with any number of sheets in the wind), which had puzzled both Newton and Nottage, and the two public-houses at Porthcawl, and might have enabled him to marry even a farmer's widow with a rabbit-warren, and £350 to dispose of, and a reputation for sheep's-milk cheese, and herself not bad-looking, in spite of a beard.

I could see, and could carry home the truth, having thoroughly got to the bottom of it; and might have a chance myself to settle, if I dealt my secret well, with some of the women who had sworn to be single, until that Fuzzy provoked them so. This consideration added, more than can be now described, to my desire to get home before any one got in front of me. But Fuzzy, from day to day, pretended that the ketch was not victualled to sail, any more than she was even ballasted. She must load with hay, or with bricks, or pottery, or with something to fill her hold and pay freight, or what was to fill our bellies all the way back? And so on, and so on; until I was sure that he had some dark reason for lingering there.

Of course I had not been such a pure fool—in spite of short reasons for going from home—as to forget my desire and need to come home, after proper interval. The whole of the parish would yearn for me, and so would Ewenny and Llaleston, long ere the Christmas cod comes in; and I made a point in my promises to be back before Gunpowder Treason and Plot. As a thoroughly ancient hand at the cannon, I always led the fireworks; and the Pope having done something violent lately, they were to be very grand this year. What is a man when outside his own country—a prophet, a magistrate, even a sailor, who has kept well in with his relations? All his old friends are there, longing to praise him, when they hear of good affairs; and as to his enemies—a man of my breadth of nature has none.

This made it dreadfully grievous for me not to be getting home again; and my heart was like a sprouted onion when I thought of Bardie. Bunny would fight on, I knew, and get converted to the Church in the house of our churchwarden, and perhaps be baptised after all, which my wife never would have done to her. However, I did not care for that, because no great harm could come of it; and if the Primitives gave her ribbons, the Church would be bound to grant Honiton lace.

Thinking of all my engagements, and compacts, and serious trusteeships, and the many yearnings after me, I told Bethel Jose, in so many words, that I was not a black man, but a white man, unable to be trampled on, and prepared (unless they could show me better) to place my matter in the hands of his worship, no less than the Mayor of Barnstaple. Fuzzy grinned, and so did Ike; and finding the mayor sitting handsomely upon the very next market-day, I laid my case before him. His worship (as keeping a grocer's shop, at which I had bought three pounds of onions, and a quarter of a pound of speckled cheese, and half an ounce of tobacco) was much inclined to do me justice; and, indeed, began to do so in a loud and powerful voice, and eager for people to hearken him. But somebody whispered something to him, containing, no doubt, the great Parson's name, and he shrank back into his hole, and discharged my summons, like a worm with lime laid on his tail.

Such things are painful; yet no man must insist upon them hardly, because our ancestors got on among far greater hardships. And it would prove us a bad low age if we turned sour about them. We are the finest fellows to fight that were ever according to Providence; we ought to be thankful for this

great privilege (as I mean to show by-and-by), and I would not shake hands with any man, who, for trumpery stuff, would dare to make such a terrible force internal.

This grand soundness of my nature led me to go under orders, though acquit of legal contract, only seeking to do the right while receiving the money beforehand. Now this created a position of trust, for it involved a strong confidence in one's honour. Any man paying me beforehand places me at a disadvantage, which is hardly fair of him. I do not like to refuse him, because it would seem so ungraceful; and yet I can never be sure but that I ought to take consideration.

Not to dwell too much upon scruples which scarcely any one else might feel, and no other man can enter into, be it enough that my honour now was bound to do what was expected. But what a hardship it was, to be sure, to find myself debarred entirely from forming acquaintance, or asking questions, or going into the matter in my own style! especially now that my anxiety was quickened beyond bearing to get to the bottom of all these wonders about Sir Philip Bampfylde. What had led him to visit me? What was he seeking on Braunton Burrows—for now I knew that it must be he? Why

did Parson Chowne desire to keep such watch on the visitors to Narnton Court by water, while all the world might pass into or out of the house by land? Or did the Parson keep other people watching the other side of the house, and prevent me from going near them, lest we should league together to cheat him? This last thing seemed to be very likely, and it proved to be more than that.

Revolving all this much at leisure in the quiet churn of mind, I pushed off with my little dingy from the side of the Rose of Devon, when the evening dusk was falling, somewhere at October's end. This little boat now seemed to be placed at my disposal always, although there used to be such a fuss, and turn for turn, in taking her. Now the glance of light on water, and the flowing shadows, keeping humour with the quiet play of evening breezes, here a hill and there a tree or rock to be regarded, while the strong influx of sea with white wisps traced the middle channel, and the little nooks withdrawn under gentle promontories took no heed of anything; when the moon came over these, dissipating clouds and moving sullen mists aside her track, I found it uncommonly difficult to be sure what I was up to. The full moon, lately risen, gazed directly down the river; but memory of daylight still was coming

from the westward, feeble, and inclined to yield. What business was all this of mine? God makes all things to have turn; and I doubt if He ever meant mankind to be always spying into it. Ever so much better go these things without our bother; and our parson said, being a noble preacher, and fit any day for the navy, that the people who conquered the world, according to the prophet Joel—20th after Trinity—never noticed nature, never did consult the Lord of Hosts, and yet must have contented him.

Difficult questions of this colour must be left to parsons (who beat all lawyers, out and out, in the matter of pure cleverness; because the latter never can anyhow, but the former, somehow, with the greatest ease, reconcile all difficulties). The only business I have to deal with is what I bodily see, feel, and hear, and have mind to go through with, and work out to perfect satisfaction. And this night I found more than ever broke upon my wits before, except when muzzle gapes at muzzle, and to blow or be blown up depends upon a single spark.

Because now, in my quiet manner (growing to be customary, under Parson Chowne's regard) dipping oars, I crossed the river, making slant for running tide. That man, knowing everybody who might suit his purpose, had employed me rather than old Ikey,

or even Fuzzy, partly because I could row so well and make no sound in doing it; while either of them, with muffled rowlocks, would splash and grunt, to be heard across river, and half-way to Barnstaple Bridge almost. As silently as an owl I skimmed across the silent river, not with the smallest desire to spy, but because the poetry of my nature came out strongly. And having this upon me still, I rowed my boat into a drooping tree, overhanging a quiet nook. Here I commanded the river-front of all that great house, Narnton Court, which stands on the north side of the water over against our Deadman's Pill. After several voyages under sundry states of light and weather, this was now approved to me as the very best point of observation. For all the long and straggling house (quite big enough for any three of the magistrates' houses on our side) could have been taken and raked (as it were) like a great ship with her stern to me, from the spot where I lay hidden. Such a length it stretched along, with little except the west end to me, and a show of front-windows dark and void; and all along the river-terrace, and the narrow spread of it, overlooking the bright water, pagan gods, or wicked things just as bad, all standing. However, that was not my business; if the gentry will forego the whole of their Christianity, they must answer for

themselves, when the proper time appears. Only we would let them know that we hold aloof from any breach of their commandments.

A flight of ten wild ducks had been seen coming up the river, every now and then, as well as fourteen red-caps, and three or four good wisps of teal. Having to see to my victualling now, as well as for the sport of it, I loaded the Parson's two-foot pistol, which was as good as a gun almost, with three tobacco pipes full of powder poured into each barrel, and then a piece of an ancient hat (which Ikey had worn so long that no man could distinguish it from wadding), and upon the top of the hat three ounces of leaden pellets, and all kept tight with a good dollop of oakum. It must kill a wild duck at forty yards, or a red-cap up to fifty, if I hit the rogues in the head at all.

The tide must have been pretty nigh the flood, and the moon was rising hazily, and all the river was pale and lonely, for the brown-sailed lighters (which they call the "Tawton fleet") had long passed by, when I heard that silvery sound of swiftness cleaving solitude—the flight of a wedge of wild ducks. I knelt in the very smallest form that nature would allow of, and with one hand held a branch to keep the boat from surging. Plash they came

down, after two short turns (as sudden as forked lightning), heads down for a moment, then heads up, and wings flapping, sousing, and subsiding. Quacks began, from the old drake first, and then from the rest of the company, and a racing after one another, and a rapid gambolling. Under and between them all, the river lost its smoothness, beaten into ups and downs that sloped away in ridge and furrow.

These fine fellows, as fat as butter after the barley-stubble time, carried on such joy and glory within twenty yards of me that I could not bring my gun to bear for quiet shot, so as to settle four. Like an ancient gunner, I bided my time, being up to the tricks of most of them. When their wild delight of water should begin to sate itself, what would they do? Why, gather in round the father of the family, and bob their heads together. This is the time to be sure of them, especially with two barrels fired at once, as I could easily manage. I never felt surer of birds in my life; I smelt them in the dripping-pan, and beheld myself quite basting them, but all of a sudden, up they flew, when I had got three in a line, and waited for two more to come into it, just as the muzzle was true upon them—up and away, and left me nothing except to rub my eyes and swear. I might have shot as they rose, but something told me

not to do so. Therefore I crept back in my little punt, and waited. In another moment I heard the swing of stout oars pulled with time and power, such as I had not heard for years, nor since myself was stroke of it. Of course I knew that this must be a boat of the British navy, probably the captain's gig, and choice young fellows rowing her; and the tears sprang into my eyes at thought of all the times and things between, and all the heavy falls of life, since thus I clove the waters. All my heart went out towards her, and I held my breath with longing (as I looked between the branches of the dark and fluttering tree), just to let them know that here was one who understood them.

CHAPTER XXXI.

TWO LOVERS.

The boat came round the corner swiftly of the wooded stretch of rock, within whose creek I lay concealed; and the officer in the stern-sheets cried, in the short sharp tone of custom, "Easy, stroke; hold all!" I heard him jerk the rudder-lines, as they passed within biscuit-toss of me, and with a heavy sheer he sent her, as if he knew every inch of water, to the steps of Narnton Court: not the handsome balustrade, only a landing of narrow stone-way nearer to me than the western end, and where the river-side terrace stopped. Two men sprang ashore and made the boat fast at the landing, and then some others lifted out what seemed to be a heavy chest, and placed it on the topmost step, until the officer, having landed, signed to them to bear it further to a corner of the parapet. I could see the whole of these doings, and distinguish him by his uniform,

because the boat and the group of sailors were not more than fifty yards from me, and almost in the track of the moon from the place where I was hiding. In a minute or two all returned to the boat, with the exception of the officer, and I heard him give orders from the shore—

"Round the point, men! Keep close, and wait for me under the Yellow Hook I showed you."

The coxswain jumped into the stern-sheets; in a second or two they had put about, and the light gig pulling six good oars shot by me, on the first of the ebb, as swiftly almost as the wild ducks flew. Meanwhile the officer stood and gazed until they had rounded the western point, from which they had spoiled my shot so; and knowing the vigilant keenness of a British captain's eyes, I feared that he might espy my punt, which would have disgraced me dreadfully. And even without this I felt how much I would rather be far away. There could have been no man more against my taste to keep a watch upon than a captain in the royal navy, whose father might have been over me. And vigorously as I called to mind that all I was doing must be for his good, as well as for that of his relatives, I could not find that satisfaction which ought to flow from such benevolence. However, it now was too late to back

out, even if my desire to know the end of this matter allowed of it.

The officer stood for a minute or two, as if in brown thoughts and deep melancholy, and turned to the house once or twice, and seemed to hesitate as to approaching it. The long great house, with the broad river-front, looked all dark and desolate; not a servant, a horse, or even a dog was moving, and the only sign of life I could see was a dull light in a little window over a narrow doorway. While I was wondering at all this, and the captain standing gloomily, a little dark figure crossed the moonlight from the shadowy doorway, and the officer made a step or two, and held out his arms and received it. They seemed to stay pretty well satisfied thus, the figure being wholly female, until, with a sudden change of thought, there seemed to be some sobbing. This led the captain to try again some soft modes of persuasion, such as I could not see into, even if I would have deigned to do a thing against my grain so, because I have been in that way myself, and did not want to be looked at. However, not to be too long over what every man almost goes through (some honestly, and some anyhow, but all tending to experience), my only desire was, finding them at it, to get out of the way very quickly. For, poor as I am,

there were several women of Newton, and Llaleston, and Ewenny, and even of Bridgend, our market-town, setting their caps, like springles, at me! Whereas I laboured at nothing else but to pay respect to my poor wife's memory, and never have a poor woman after her. And now all these romantic doings made me feel uneasy, and ready to be infected, so as to settle with nothing more than had been offered me thrice, and three times refused—a 7-foot-and-6-inch mangle; and (if she proved a tiger) have to work it myself perhaps!

Be that either way, these two unhappy lovers came along, while I was wondering at them, yet able to make allowance so, until they must have seen me, if they had a corner of an eye for anything less than one another. They stood on a plank that crossed the narrow creek or slot (wherein I lay, under a willow full of brown leaves), and scarcely ten yards from me. Here there was a rail across, about as big as a kidney-bean stick, whereupon they leaned, and looked into the water under them. Then they sighed, and made such sorrow (streaked somehow with happiness) that I got myself ready to leap overboard if either or both of them should jump in. However, they had more sense than that; though they went on very tenderly, and with a soft strain

quite unfit to belong to a British officer. Being, from ancient though humble birth, gifted with a deal of delicacy, I pulled out two plugs of tobacco, which happened to be in my mouth just now, and I spared them both to stop my ears, though striking inwards painfully. I tried to hear nothing for ever so long; but I found myself forced to ease out the plugs, they did smart so confoundedly. And this pair wanted some one now to take a judicious view of them, for which few men, perhaps, could be found better qualified than I was. For they carried on in so high a manner, that it seemed as if they could be cured by nothing short of married life, of which I had so much experience. And the principal principle of that state is, that neither party must begin to make too much of the other side. But being now over that sort of thing, I found myself snug in a corner, and able to view them with interest and considerable candour.

"Is there no hope of it then, after all; after all you have done and suffered, and the prayers of everybody?" This was the maiden, of course having right to the first word, and the last of it.

"There is hope enough, my darling; but nothing ever comes of it. And how can I search out this strange matter, while I am on service always?"

"Throw it up, Drake; my dear heart, for my sake, throw it up, and throw over all ambition, until you are cleared of this foul shame."

"My ambition is slender now," he answered, "and would be content with one slender lady." Here he gave her a squeeze, that threatened not only to make her slenderer, but also to make the rail need more stoutness, and me to keep ready for plunging. "Nevertheless, you know," he went on, when the plank and the rail put up with it, "I cannot think of myself for a moment, while I am thus on duty. We expect orders for America."

"So you said; and it frightens me. If that should be so, what ever, ever can become of us?"

"My own dear, you are a child; almost a child for a man like me, knocked about the world so much, and ever so unfortunate."

The rest of his speech was broken into, much to my dissatisfaction, by a soft caressing comfort, such as women's pity yields without any consideration. Only they made all sorts of foolish promises, and eternal pledges, touched up with confidence, and hope, and mutual praise, and faith, and doubt, and the other ins and outs of love.

"I won't cry any more," she said, with several sobs between it; "I ought not to be so with you,

who are so strong, and good, and kind. Your honour is cruelly wronged at home: you never shall say that your own, own love wished you to peril it also abroad."

He took her quietly into his arms; and they seemed to strengthen one another. And to my eyes came old tears, or at any rate such as had come long ago. These two people stood a great time, silent, full of one another, keeping close with reverent longing, gazing yet not looking at the moonlight and the water. Then the delicate young maiden (for such her voice and outline showed her, though I could not judge her face) shivered in the curling fog which the climbing moon had brought. Hereupon the captain felt that her lungs must be attended to, as well as her lips, and her waist, and heart; and he said in a soft way, like a shawl—

"Come away, my lovely darling, from the cold, and fog, and mist. Your little cloak is damp all through; and time it is for me to go. Discipline I will have always; and I must have the same with you, until you take command of me."

"Many, many a weary year, ere I have the chance of it, Captain Drake." The young thing sighed as she spoke, though perhaps without any sense of prophecy.

"Isabel, let us not talk like that, even if we think it. The luck must turn some day, my darling; even I cannot be always on the evil side of it. How often has my father said so! And what stronger proof can I have than you? As long as you are true to me——"

They were turning away, when this bright idea, which seems to occur to lovers always, under some great law of nature, to prolong their interviews;—this compelled them to repeat pretty much the same forms, and ceremonies, assurances, pledges, and such-like, which had passed between them scarcely more than three or four minutes ago, at the utmost. And again I looked away, because I would have had others do so to me; and there was nothing new to learn by it.

"Only one thing more, my own," said the lady, taking his arm again; "one more thing you must promise me. If you care for me at all, keep out of the way of that dreadful man."

"Why, how can I meet him at sea, my Bell? Even if he dislikes me, as you tell me perpetually, though I never gave him cause, that I know of."

"He does not dislike you, Drake Bampfylde; he hates you with all the venomous, cold, black hatred, such as I fear to think of—oh my dear, oh my dear!"

"Now, Isabel, try not to be so foolish. I never could believe such a thing, and I never will, without clearest proof. I never could feel like that myself, even if any one wronged me deeply. And in spite of all my bad luck, Bell, I have never wronged any one. At least, more than you know of."

"Then don't wrong me, my own dear love, by taking no heed of yourself. Here, there, and everywhere seems to be his nature. You may be proud of your ship and people, and of course they are proud of you. You may be ordered to Gibraltar, where they have done so gloriously, or to America, or to India. But wherever you are, you never can be out of the reach of that terrible man. His ways are so crooked, and so dark, and so dreadfully cold-blooded."

"Isabel, Isabel, now be quiet. What an imagination you have! A man in holy orders, a man of a good old family, who have been ancient friends of ours——"

"A bad old family, you mean—bad for generations. It does not matter, of course, what I say, because I am so young and stupid. But you are so frank, and good, and simple, and so very brave and careless, and I know that you will own some day —oh, it frightens me so to think of it!—that you

were wrong in this matter, and your Isabel was right."

What his answer was I cannot tell, because they passed beyond my hearing upon their way towards the house. The young lady, with her long hair shining like woven gold in the moonlight, tried (so far as I could see) to persuade him to come in with her. This, however, he would not do, though grieving to refuse her; and she seemed to know the reason of it, and to cease to urge him. In and out of many things, which they seemed to have to talk of, he showed her the great chest in the dark corner; and perhaps she paid good heed to it. As to that, how can I tell, when they both were so far off, and river-fogs arising? Yet one thing I well could tell, or at any rate could have told it in the times when my blood ran fast, and my habit of life was romantic. Even though the light was foggy, and there was no time to waste, these two people seemed so to stay with a great dislike of severing.

However, they managed it at last; and growing so cold in my shoulders now, as well as my knees uncomfortable, right glad was I to hear what the maiden listened to with intense despair; that is to say, the captain's footfall, a yard further off every time of the sound. He went along the Braunton

road, to find his boat where the river bends. And much as I longed to know him better, and understand why he did such things, and what he meant by hankering so after this young lady, outside his own father's house, and refusing to go inside when invited, and speaking of his own bad luck so much, and having a chest put away from the moonlight, likewise his men in the distance so far, and compelled to keep round the corner, not to mention his manner of walking, and swinging his shoulders, almost as if the world was nothing to him; although I had never been perhaps so thoroughly pushed with desire of knowledge, and all my best feelings uppermost, there was nothing for me left except to ponder, and to chew my quid, rowing softly through the lanes and lines of misty moonlight, to my little cuddy-home across the tidal river.

CHAPTER XXXII.

AMONG THE SAVAGES.

At this moment it became a very nice point to perceive what was really honest and right, and then to carry it out with all that fearless alacrity, which in such cases I find to be, as it were, constitutional to me. My high sense of honour would fain persuade me to keep in strictest secrecy that which (so far as I could judge) was not, or might not have been, intended for my eyes, or ears, or tongue. On the other hand, my still higher sense of duty to my employer (which is a most needful and practical feeling), and that power of loyalty which descends to me, and perhaps will die with me, as well as a strong, and no less ancestral, eagerness to be up to the tricks of all mysterious beings—I do not exaggerate when I say that the cutwater of my poor mind knew not which of these two hands pulled the stronger oar.

In short, being tired, and sleepy, and weary, and

worn out with want of perceiving my way, although I smoked three pipes all alone (not from the smallest desire for them, but because I have routed the devil thus many and many a night I know—as the priests do with their incense; the reason of which I take to be, that having so much smoke at home, he shuns it when coming for change of air—growing dreamy thus), I said, with nobody to answer me, "I will tumble into my berth, as this dirty craft has no room for hammocks; and, between Parson and Captain, I will leave my dreams to guide me."

I played with myself, in saying this. No man ever should play with himself. It shows that he thinks too troublesomely; and soon may come, if he carries it on, almost to forget that other people are nothing, while himself is everything. And if any man comes to that state of mind, there is nothing more to hope of him.

I was not so far gone as that. Nevertheless, it served me right (for thinking such dreadful looseness) to have no broad fine road of sleep, in the depth whereof to be borne along, and lie wherever wanted; but instead of that to toss and kick, with much self-damage, and worst of all, to dream such murder that I now remember it. What it was, belongs to me, who paid for it with a loss of hair, very

serious at my time of life. However, not to dwell upon that, or upon myself in any way—such being my perpetual wish, yet thwarted by great activity—let it be enough to say that Parson Chowne in my visions came and horribly stood over me.

Therefore, arising betimes, I hired a very fine horse, and, manning him bravely, laid his head east and by south, as near as might be, according to our binnacle. But though the wind was abaft the beam, and tide and all in his favour, and a brave commander upon his poop, what did he do but bouse his stem, and run out his spanker-driver, and up with his taffrail, as if I was wearing him in a thundering heavy sea. I resolved to get the upper hand of this uncalled-for mutiny; and the more so because all our crew were gazing, and at the fair I had laid down the law very strictly concerning horses. I slipped my feet out of the chains, for fear of any sudden capsize, and then I rapped him over the cat-heads, where his anchor ought to hang. He, however, instead of doing at all what I expected, up with his bolt-sprit and down with his quarter, as if struck by a whale under his forefoot. This was so far from true seamanship, and proved him to be so unbuilt for sailing, that I was content to disembark over his stern, and with slight concussions.

"Never say die" has always been my motto, and always will be: nailing my colours to the mast, I embarked upon another horse of less than half the tonnage of that one who would not answer helm. And this craft, being broken-backed, with a strange sound at her portholes, could not under press of sail bowl along more than four knots an hour. And we adjusted matters between us so, that when she was tired I also was sore, and therefore disembarked and towed her, until we were both fit for sea again. Therefore it must have been good meridian when I met Parson Chowne near his house.

This man was seldom inside his own house, except at his meal-times, or when asleep, but roving about uncomfortably, seeing to the veriest trifles, everywhere abusing or kicking everybody. And but for the certainty of his witchcraft (nine-fold powerful, as they told me, when conferred upon a parson), and the black strength of his eyes, and the doom that had befallen all who dared to go against him, the men about the yards and stables told me—when he was miles away—that they never could have put up with him; for his wages were also below their deserts.

He came to me from the kennel of hounds, which he kept not for his own pleasure so much as for the

delight of forbidding gentlemen, whenever the whim might take him so, especially if they were nobly accoutred, from earning at his expense the glory of jumping hedges and ditches. Now, as he came towards me, or rather beckoned for me to come to him, I saw that the other truly eminent parson, the Reverend John Rambone, was with him, and giving advice about the string at the back of a young dog's tongue. Although this man was his greatest friend, Master Chowne treated him no better than anybody else would fare; but signed to the mate of the hounds, or whatever those fox-hunters call their chief officer, to heed every word of what Rambone said. Because these two divines had won faith, throughout all parishes and hundreds: Chowne for the doctrine of horses; and for discipline of dogs, John Rambone.

His Reverence fixed a stern gaze upon me, because I had not hurried myself — a thing which I never do, except in a glorious naval action—and then he bade me follow him. This I did; and I declare even now I cannot tell whither he took me. For I seemed to have no power, in his presence, of heeding anything but himself: only I know that we passed through trees, and sate down somewhere afterwards. Wherever it was, or may have been, so

far as my memory serves, I think that I held him at bay some little. For instance, I took the greatest care not to speak of the fair young lady; inasmuch as she might not have done all she did, if she had chanced to possess the knowledge of my being under the willow-tree. But Parson Chowne, without my telling, knew the whole of what was done; and what he thought of it none might guess in the shadowy shining of his eyes.

"You have done pretty well on the whole," he said, after asking many short questions; "but you must do better next time, my man. You must not allow all these delicate feelings, chivalry, resolute honesty, and little things of that sort, to interfere thus with business. These things do some credit to you, Llewellyn, and please you, and add to your happiness, which consists largely with you (as it does with all men) in conceit. But you must not allow yourself thus to coquet with these beauties of human nature. It needs a rich man to do that. Even add my five shillings to your own four, and you cannot thus go to Corinth."

I had been at Corinth twice, and found it not at all desirable; so I could not make out what his Reverence meant, except that it must be something bad; which at my time of life should not be put

into the mind, even by a clergyman. But what I could least put up with was, the want of encouragement I found for all my better feelings. These seemed to meet with nothing more than discouragement and disparagement, whereas I knew them to be sound, substantial, and solid; and I always felt upon going to bed what happiness they afforded me. And if the days of my youth had only passed through learned languages, Latin and Greek and Hebrew, I doubt whether even Parson Chowne could have laid his own will upon me so.

"Supposing, then, that your Reverence should make it ten," I answered; "with my own four, that would be fourteen."

"I can truly believe that it would, my man. And you may come to that, if you go on well. Now go into the house and enjoy yourself. You Welshmen are always hungry. And you may talk as freely as you like; which is your next desire. Every word you say will come back to me; and some of it may amuse me. If you have no sense, you have some cunning. You will know what things to speak of. And be sure that you wait until I come back."

This was so wholly below and outside of the thing which I love to reconcile with my own constitution (having so long been respected for them, as well as

rewarded by conscience), that I scarcely knew where or who I was, or what might next come over me. And to complete my uncomfortable sense of being nobody, I heard the sound of a galloping horse downhill as wild as could be, and found myself left as if all the ideas which I was prepared to suggest were nothing. However, that was not my loss, but his; so I entered the house, with considerable hope of enjoying myself, as commanded. For this purpose I have always found it, in the house of a gentleman, the height of luck to get among three young women and one old one. The elderly woman attends to the cooking, which is not understood by the young ones, or at any rate cannot be much expected; while, on the other hand, the young ones flirt in and out in a pleasant way, laying the table and showing their arms (which are of a lovely red, as good as any gravy); and then if you know how to manage them well, with a wholesome deference to the old cook, and yet an understanding—while she is basting, and as one might almost say, behind her back—a confidential feeling established that you know how she treats those young ones, and how harshly she dares to speak, if a coal comes into the dripping-pan, and in casting it out she burns her face, and abuses the whole of them for her own fault; also a little shy

suggestion that they must put up with all this, because the old cook is past sweethearting time, and the parlour-maid scarcely come to it, accompanied by a wink or two, and a hint in the direction of the stables—some of the very noblest dinners that ever I made have been thus introduced. But what forgiveness could I expect, or who would listen to me, if I dared to speak in the same dinner-hour of the goodly kitchen at Candleston Court, or even at Court Ysha, and the place that served as a sort of kitchen, so far as they seemed to want one, at this Nympton Rectory? A chill came over every man, directly he went into it; and he knew that his meat would be hocks and bones, and his gravy (if any) would stand cold dead. However, I made the best of it, as my manner is with everything; and though the old stony woman sate, and seemed to make stone of every one, I kept my spirits up, and became (in spite of all her stoppage) what a man of my knowledge of mankind must be among womankind. In a word, though I do not wish to set down exactly how I managed it, in half an hour I could see, while carefully concealing it, that there was not a single young woman there without beginning to say to herself, "Should I like to be Mrs Llewellyn?" After that, I can have them always. But I know them

too well, to be hasty. No prospects would suit me, at my time of life, unless they came after some cash in hand. The louts from the stables and kennels poured in, some of them very "degustin" (as my Bardie used to say), nevertheless the girls seemed to like them; and who was I, even when consulted, to pretend to say otherwise? In virtue of what I had seen, among barbarous tribes and everywhere, and all my knowledge of ceremonies, and the way they marry one another, it took me scarcely half an hour (especially among poor victuals) to have all the women watching for every word I was prepared to drop. Although this never fails to happen, yet it always pleases me; and to find it in Parson Chowne's kitchen go thus, and the stony woman herself compelled to be bitten by mustard for fear of smiling, and two or three maids quite unfit to get on without warm pats on their shoulder-blades, and the dogs quite aware that men were laughing, and that this meant luck for them if they put up their noses; it was not for me to think much of myself; and yet how could I help doing it?

In the midst of this truly social joy, and natural commune over victuals, and easing of thought to suit one another in the courtesies of digestion; and just as the slowest among us began to enter into

some knowledge of me, in walked that great Parson Rambone, with his hands behind his back, and between them a stout hunting-crop. The maidens seemed to be taken aback, but the men were not much afraid of him.

"What a rare royster you are making! Out by the kennel I heard you. However can I write my sermons?"

"Does your Reverence write them in the kennel?" Thus the chief huntsman made inquiry, having a certain privilege.

"Clear out, clear out," said Rambone, fetching his whip toward all of us; "I am left in authority here, and I must have proper discipline. Mrs Steelyard, I am surprised at you. Girls, you must never go on like this. What will his Reverence say to me? Come along with me, thou villain Welshman, and give me a light for my pipe, if you please."

It was a sad thing to behold a man of this noble nature, having gifts of everything (whether of body, or heart, or soul), only wanting gift of mind; and for want of that alone, making wreck of all the rest. I let him lead me; while I felt how I longed to have the lead of him. But that was in stronger hands than mine.

"Come, and I'll show thee a strange sight, Taffy,"

he said to me very pleasantly, as soon as his pipe was kindled; "only I must have my horse, to inspire them with respect for me, as well as to keep my distance. Where is thy charger, thou valiant Taffy?"

I answered his Reverence that I would rather travel afoot, if it were not too far; neither could he persuade me, after the experience of that morning, to hoist my flag on an unknown horse, the command of which he offered me. So forth we set, the Parson on horseback, and in very high spirits, trolling songs, leaping hedges, frolicking enough to frighten one, and I on foot, rather stiff and weary, and needing a glass of grog, without any visible chance of getting it.

"Here, you despondent Taffy; take this, and brighten up a bit. It is true you are going to the gallows; but there's no room for you there just now."

I saw what he meant, as he handed me his silver hunting-flask, for they have a fashion about there of hanging bad people at cross ways, and leaving them there for the good of others, and to encourage honesty. And truly the place was chosen well; for in the hollow not far below it, might be found those savage folk, of whom I said something a good while ago. And I did not say then what I might have said; because I felt scandalised, and unwilling to press any question of doubtful doings upon thoroughly accom-

plished people. But now I am bound, like a hospital surgeon, to display the whole of it.

"Take hold of the tail of my horse, old Taffy," said his Reverence to me; "and I will see you clear of them. Have no fear, for they all know me."

By this time we were surrounded with fifteen or twenty strange-looking creatures, enough to frighten anybody. Many fine savages have I seen—on the shores of the Land of Fire, for instance, or on the coast of Guinea, or of the Gulf of Panama, and in fifty other places—yet none did I ever come across so outrageous as these were. They danced, and capered, and caught up stones, and made pretence to throw at us; and then, with horrible grimaces, showed their teeth and jeered at us. Scarcely any of the men had more than a piece of old sack upon him; and as for the women, the less I say, the more you will believe it. My respect for respectable women is such that I scarcely dare to irritate them, by not saying what these other women were as concerns appearance. And yet I will confine myself, as if of the female gender, to a gentle hint that these women might have looked much nicer, if only they had clothes on.

But the poor little "piccaninies," as the niggers call them, these poor little devils were far worse off

than any hatch of negroes, or Maroons, or copper-colours anywhere in the breeding-grounds. Not so much from any want of tendance or clean management, which none of the others ever got; but from difference of climate, and the moisture of their native soil. These little creatures, all stark naked, seemed to be well enough off for food, of some sort or another, but to be very badly off for want of washing and covering up. And their little legs seemed to be growing crooked; the meaning of which was beyond me then; until I was told that it took its rise from the way they were forced to crook them in, to lay hold of one another's legs, for the sake of natural warmth and comfort, as the winter-time came on, when they slept in the straw all together. I believe this was so; but I never saw it.

The Reverend John Rambone took no other notice of these people than to be amused with them. He knew some two or three of the men, and spoke of them by their nicknames, such as "Browny," or "Horse-hair," or "Sandy boy;" and the little children came crawling on their bellies to him. This seemed to be their natural manner of going at an early age: and only one of all the very little children walked upright. This one came to the Parson's horse, and being still of a tottery order, laid hold of

a fore-leg to fetch up his own; and having such moorage, looked up at the horse. The horse, for his part, looked down upon him, bending his neck, as if highly pleased; yet with his nostrils desiring to snort, and the whole of his springy leg quivering, but trying to keep quiet, lest the baby might be injured. This made me look at the child again, whose little foolish life was hanging upon the behaviour of a horse. The rider perceived that he could do nothing, in spite of all his great strength and skill, to prevent the horse from dashing out the baby's brains with his fore-hoof, if only he should rear or fret. And so he only soothed him. But I, being up to all these things, and full for ever of presence of mind, slipped in under the hold of the horse, as quietly as possible, and in a manner which others might call at the same time daring and dexterous, I fetched the poor little fellow out of his dangerous position.

"Well done, Taffy!" said Parson Jack; "I should never have thought you had sense enough for it. You had a narrow shave, my man."

For the horse, being frightened by so much nakedness, made a most sudden spring over my body, before I could rise with the child in my arms; and one of his after-hoofs knocked my hat off, so that I felt truly thankful not to have had a worse business

of it. But I would not let any one laugh at my fright.

"A miss is as good as a mile, your Reverence. Many a cannon-ball has passed me nearer than your horse's hoof. Tush, a mere trifle! Will your Reverence give this poor little man a ride?" And with that I offered him the child upon his saddle-bow, naked, and unwashed, and kicking.

"Keep off, or you shall taste my horsewhip. Keep away with your dirty brat—and yet—oh, poor little devil! If I only had a cloth with me!"

For this parson was of tender nature, although so wild and reckless; and in his light way he was moved at the wretched plight of this small creature, and the signs of heavy stripes upon him. Not all over him, as the Parson said, being prone to exaggerate; but only extending over his back, and his hams, and other convenient places. And perhaps my jacket made them smart, for he roared every time I lifted him. And every time I set him down, he stared with a wistful kind of wonder at our clothes, and at the noble horse, as if he were trying to remember something. "Where can they have picked up this poor little beggar?" said Parson Jack, more to himself than to me: "he looks of a different breed altogether. I wonder if this is one of Stoyle's damned tricks."

And all the way back he spoke never a word, but seemed to be worrying with himself. But I having set the child down on his feet, and dusted my clothes, and cleaned myself, followed the poor little creature's toddle, and examined him carefully. The rest of the children seemed to hate him, and he, to shrink out of their way almost; and yet he was the only fine and handsome child among them. For in spite of all the dirt upon it, his face was honest, and fair, and open, with large soft eyes of a dainty blue, and short thick curls of yellow hair that wanted combing sadly. And though he had rolled in muddy places, as little wild children always do, for the sake of keeping the cold out, his skin was white, where the mud had peeled, and his form lacked nothing but washing.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

IN A STATE OF NATURE.

Now all these things contributed, coming as they did so rapidly, to arouse inside me a burning and almost desperate curiosity. It was in vain that I said to myself, "these are no concerns of mine: let them manage their own affairs: the less I meddle, the better for me: I seem to be in a barbarous land, and I must expect things barbarous. And after all, what does it come to, compared with the great things I have seen, ay, and played my part in?" To reason thus, and regard it thus, and seek only to be quit of it, was a proof of the highest wisdom any man could manifest: if he could only stick to it. And this I perceived, and thus I felt, and praised myself for enforcing it so; until it became not only safe, but a bounden duty to reward my conscience by a little talk or so.

Hence I lounged into the stable-yard—for that

terrible Chowne was not yet come back, neither were maids to be got at for talking, only that stony Steelyard—and there I found three or four shirt-sleeved fellows, hissing at horses, and rubbing away, to put their sleeping polish on them, before the master should return. Also three or four more were labour-in the stalls very briskly, one at a sort of holy-stoning, making patterns with brick and sand, and the others setting up the hammocks for the nags to lie in, with a lashing of twisted straw aft of their after-heels and taffrails, as the wake of a ship might be. And all of it done most ship-shape. This amused me mightily; for I never had seen such a thing before, even among wild horses, who have power to manage their own concerns. But to see them all go in so snugly, and with such a sweet, clean savour, each to his own oats or mashings, with the golden straw at foot, made me think, and forced me to it, of those wretched white barbarians (white, at least, just here and there), whom good Parson Jack—as one might almost try to call him—had led me to visit that same afternoon.

Perceiving how the wind sate, I even held back, and smoked a pipe, exactly as if I were overseer, and understood the whole of it, yet did not mean to make rash reproach. This had a fine effect upon

them, especially as I chewed a straw, by no means so as to stop my pipe, but to exhibit mastery. And when I put my leg over a rail, as if I found it difficult to keep myself from horseback, the head-man came to me straightforward, and asked me when I had hunted last.

I told him that I was always hunting, week-days, and Sundays, and all the year round, because it was our fashion; and that we hunted creatures such as he never had the luck to set eyes on. And when I had told him a few more things (such as flow from experience, when mixed with imagination), a duller man than myself might see that he longed for me to sup with him. And he spoke of things that made me ready, such as tripe and onions.

However, this would never do. I felt myself strongly under orders; and but for this paramount sense of duty, never could I have done the things modestly mentioned as of yore; and those of hereafter tenfold as fine, such as no modesty dare suppress. So, when I had explained to him exactly how I stood about it, he did not refuse to fill his pipe with a bit of my choice tobacco, and to come away from all idle folk, to a place in the shelter of a rick, where he was sure to hear the hoofs of his master's horse returning. I sate with

him thus, and we got on well; and as he was going to marry soon the daughter of a publican, who had as good as fifty pounds, and nothing that could be set on fire, and lived fifty miles away almost, he did not mind telling me all the truth, because he saw that I could keep it; and at his age he could not enter into the spirit of being kicked so. I told him I should like to see a man kick me! But he said that I might come to it.

This was a very superior man, and I durst not contradict him; and having arranged so to settle in life, how could he hope to tell any more lies? For I have always found all men grow pugnaciously truthful, so to put it, for a month almost before wedlock; while the women are doing the opposite. However, not to go far into that, what he told me was much as follows:—

Parson Chowne, in early life, before his mind was put into shape for anything but to please itself, had been dreadfully vexed and thwarted. Every matter had gone amiss, directly he was concerned in it; his guardians had cheated him, so had his stepmother, so had his favourite uncle, and of course so had his lawyers done. In the thick of that bitterness, what did his sweatheart do but throw him over. She took a great scare of his strange

black eyes, when she found that his money was doubtful. This was instinct, no doubt, on her part, and may have been a great saving for her; but to him it was terrible loss. His faith was already astray a little; but a dear wife might have brought it back, or at any rate made him think so. And he was not of the nature which gropes after the bottom of everything, like a twisting auger. Having a prospect of good estates, he was sent to London to learn the law, after finishing at Oxford, not that he might practise it, but to introduce a new element to the county magistrates, when he should mount the bench among them. Here he got rogued, as was only natural, and a great part of his land fell from him, and therefore he took to the clerical line; and being of a stern and decided nature, he married three wives, one after the other, and thus got a good deal of property. It was said, of course, as it always is of any man thrice a widower, that he or his manner had killed his wives; a charge which should never be made without strong evidence in support of it. At any rate there had been no children; and different opinions were entertained whether this were the cause or effect of the Parson's dislike and contempt of little ones. Moreover, as women usually are of a tougher staple than men can be, Chowne's successive liberation from

three wives had added greatly to his fame for witchcraft, such as first accrued from his commanding style, nocturnal habits, method of quenching other people, and collection of pots and kettles. The head-groom told me, with a knowing wink, that in his opinion the Parson was now looking after wife No. 4, for he never had known him come out so smart with silver heels and crested head-piece, and even the mark of the saddle must not show upon his breeches. This was a sure sign, he thought, that there was a young lady in the wind, possessing both money and good looks, such as Chowne was entitled to, and always had insisted on. Upon that point I could have thrown some light (if prudence had permitted it), or at least I had some shrewd suspicions, after what happened beside the river; however, I said nothing. But I asked him what in his opinion first had soured the young man Chowne against the whole of the world so sadly, as he seemed to retain it now. And he answered me that he could not tell, inasmuch as the cause which he had heard given seemed to him to be most unlikely, according to all that he saw of the man. Nevertheless I bade him tell it, being an older man than he was, and therefore more able to enter into what young folk call "inconsistencies." And so he told me that it was this. Chowne, while

still a young boy, had loved, with all the force of his heart, a boy a few years younger than himself, a cousin of his own, but not with prospects such as he had. And this boy had been killed at school, and the matter hushed up comfortably among all high authorities. But Stoyle Chowne had made a vow to discover and hunt it out to the uttermost, and sooner or later to have revenge. But when his own wrongs fell upon him, doubtless he had forgotten it. I said that I did not believe he had done so, or ever would, to the uttermost.

Then I asked about Parson Jack, and heard pretty much what I expected. That he was a well-meaning man enough, although without much sense of right or wrong, until his evil star led him into Parson Chowne's society. But still he had instincts now and then, such as a horse has, of the right road; and an old woman of his church declared that he did feel his own sermons, and if let alone, and listened to, might come to act up to them. I asked whether Parson Chowne might do the like, but was told that he never preached any.

We were talking thus, and I had quite agreed to his desire of my company for supper-time, when the sound of a horse upon stony ground, tearing along at a dangerous speed, quite broke up our conference.

The groom, at the sound of it, damped out his pipe, and signified to me to do the same.

"I have fired a-many of his enemies' ricks," he whispered, in his haste and fright; "but if he were to smell me a-smoking near to a rick of his own, good Lord!" and he pointed to a hay-rope, as if he saw his halter. And though he had boasted of speedy marriage, and caring no fig for Parson Chowne, he set off for the stables at a pace likely to prove injurious to his credit for consistency.

On the other hand, I, in a leisurely manner, picked myself up from the attitude natural to me when listening kindly, and calmly asserting my right to smoke, approached the track by which I knew that the rider must come into the yard; for all the dogs had no fear of me now, by virtue of the whistle which I bore. And before I had been there half a minute, the Parson dashed up with his horse all smoking, and himself in a heavy blackness of temper, such as I somehow expected of him.

"No Jack here! not a Jack to be seen. Have the kindness to look for my stable-whip. Ho, Llewellyn is it?"

"Yes, your Reverence, David Llewellyn, once of his Majesty's Royal Navy, and now of——"

"No more of that! You have played me false.

I expected it from a rogue like you. Restore me that trust-guinea."

This so largely differed from what even Anthony Stew would dare to say in conversation with me (much less at times of evidence), that I lifted up my heart to heaven, as two or three preachers had ordered me; and even our parson had backed it up, with lineage at least as good and perhaps much better than Parson Chowne's, by right of Welsh blood under it: the whole of this overcame me so, that I could only say, "What guinea, sir?"

"What guinea, indeed! You would rob me, would you? Don't you know better than that, my man? Come to me in two hours' time. Stop, give me that dog's whistle!"

Taking that heed of me, and no more, he cast the reins to my friend the head-groom, who came up, looking for all the world as if never had he seen me, and wondered strangely who I could be. And this air of fright and denial always pervaded the whole household. All of which was quite against what I had been long accustomed to, wherever I deigned to go in with my news to the servants' place, or the housekeeper's room, or anywhere pointed out to me as the best for entertainment. Here, however, although the servants seemed to be plentiful enough,

and the horses and the hounds to have as much as they could eat, there was not a trace of what I may call good domestic comfort. When this prevails, as it ought to do in every gentleman's household, the marks may be discovered in the eyes and the mouth of everybody. Nobody thinks of giving way to injudicious hurry when bells ring, or when shouts are heard, or horses' feet at the front door. And if on the part of the carpeted rooms any disquietude is shown, or desire to play, or feed, or ride, at times outside the convenience of the excellent company down-stairs, there is nothing more to be said, except that it cannot be done, and should never in common reason have been thought of. For all servants must enjoy their meals, and must have time to digest them with proper ease for conversation and expansion afterwards. At Candleston Court it was always so; and so it should be everywhere.

However, to return to my groom, whose cordiality revived at the moment his master turned the corner, perceiving that Chowne had some matter on hand which would not allow him to visit the stables, just for the present at any rate, he turned the black mare over to the care of an understrapper, and with a wink and a smack of his lips, gave me to know that his supper was toward. Neither were we disap-

pointed, but found it all going on very sweetly, in a little private room used for cleaning harness. And he told me that this young cook-maid, of unusual abilities, had attached herself to him very strongly, with an eye to promotion, and having no scent of his higher engagement: neither would he have been unwilling to carry out her wishes if she could only have shown a sixpence against the innkeeper's daughter's shilling. I told him that he was too romantic, and he said with a sigh that he could not help it; but all would come right in the end, no doubt.

This honest affection impressed me not a little in his favour, and in less than half an hour I found him a thoroughly worthy fellow: while he perceived, through a square-stalked rummer, that my character was congenial. I told him therefore some foreign stories, many of which were exceedingly true, and he by this time was ready to answer almost anything that I chose to ask, even though he knew nothing about it. As for the people that wore no clothes, but lived all together in the old mud-house, there need be and could be no mystery. Every one knew that his Reverence had picked them up in his early days, and been pleased with their simple appearance and dislike of cultivation. Perceiving even then how

glad he might be, in after-life, to annoy his neighbours, what did he do but bring these people (then six in number, and all of them wives and husbands to one another) and persuade them to dig themselves out a house, and by deed of gift establish them on forty acres of their own land, so that, as Englishmen love to say, their house was now their castle. Not that these were perhaps English folk, but rather of a Gipsy cross, capable, however, of becoming white if a muscular man should scrub them. The groom said that nobody durst go near them, except Parson Chowne and Parson Jack, and that they seemed to get worse and worse, as they began to be persecuted by clothes-wearing people. I asked him what their manners were; and he said he believed they were good enough, so long as not interfered with; and who could blame them for maintaining that whether they wore clothes or not was entirely their own concern: also, that if outer strangers intruded, from motives of low curiosity, upon their unclad premises, it was only fair to point out to them the disadvantages of costume, by making it very hard to wash? There was some sense in this, because the main anxiety of mankind is to convert one another; and the pelting of mud is usually the beginning of such overtures. And these fine fellows having recurred (as Parson Chowne said)

to a natural state, their very first desire would be to redeem all fellow-creatures from the evils of civilisation. Whereof the foremost perhaps is clothes, and the time we take in dressing—a twelfth part of their waking life, with even the wisest women, and with the unwise virgins, often not less than three-quarters; and with many men not much better.—But to come back to my savages. I asked this good groom how it came to pass that none of the sheriffs, or deputies, or even magistrates of the shire, put down this ungoodly company. He said that they had tried, but failed, according to the laws of England, on the best authority. Because these men of the ancient Adam went back to the time before the beasts had come to Adam to get their names. They brought up their children without a name, and now all names were dying out, and they agreed much better in consequence. And how could any writ, warrant, or summons, run against people without a name? It had once been tried with a "Nesho Kiss," the meaning of which was beyond me; but Parson Chowne upset that at once; and the bailiff was fit to make bricks of.

At this I shook my head and smiled; because we put up with many evils on our side of the water, but never with people so unbecoming in their manner of life and clothes. And I thought how even mild

Colonel Lougher would have behaved upon such a point, and how sharp Anthony Stew would have stamped when they began to pelt him; and how I wished him there to try it!

Nevertheless I desired to know what victuals these good barbarians had; because, although like the Indian Jogis (mentioned by some great traveller) they might prove their right to go without clothes, which never were born upon them, they could not to my mind prove their power to do so well without victuals. He answered that this was a clever thing on my part to inquire about; but that I was so far wrong that these people would eat anything. His Reverence sent them every week the refuse of his garden, as well as of stable-yard and kennel, and they had a gift of finding food in everything around them. Their favourite dish—so to say, when they had never a dish among them—was what they discovered in the pasture-land; and this they divided carefully; accounting it the depth of shame, and the surest mark of civilisation, to cheat one another. But they could not expect to get this every day, in a neighbourhood of moorland; therefore, instead of grumbling, they did their best to get on without it. And Providence always sends thousands of victuals for all whose stomachs have not been ruined by thinking too much

about them; or very likely through the women beginning to make them delicate. So when a man is sea-sick, he thinks of and hates almost everything.

On the other hand, these noble fellows hated nothing that could be chewed. Twenty-one sorts of toadstool, with the insects which inhabit them; three varieties of eft, and of frogs no less than seven; also slugs six inches long, too large to have a house built; moles that live in lines of decks, like a man-of-war's-man; also rats, and brindled hedgehogs, and the grubs of hornets (which far surpass all oysters)—these, and other little things, like goat-moths, leopards, and money-grubs, kept them so alive as never to come down on the parish. Neither was there any hen-roost, rickyard, apple-room, or dairy, on the farms around them, but in it they found nourishment. Into all this I could enter, while the groom only showed the door of it.

But while we were talking thus, I heard the stable-clock strike eight, which brought Hezekiah to my mind, and my own church-clock at Newton. It struck in such a manner, that I saw the door of my own cottage, also Bunny in bed, with her nostrils ready to twitch for snoring, and Mother Jones, with a candle, stooping to ease her by means of a drop of hot grease; and inside, by the wall, lay Bardie, sleep-

ing (as she always slept) with a smile of high-born quietude. And what would all three say to me if ever I got back again?

Thanking this excellent groom for all his hospitality to me, and promising at his desire to keep it from his master, I took my way (as pointed out) to the room where his Reverence might be found. I feared that his temper would be black, unless he had dined as I had supped, and taken a good glass afterwards. And I could not believe what the groom had told me concerning one particular. There is a most utterly pestilent race arising, and growing up around us, whose object is to destroy old England, by forbidding a man to drink. St Paul speaks against them, and all the great prophets; and the very first thing that was done by our Lord, after answering them in the Temple, was to put them to shame with a great many firkins. Also one of the foremost parables is concerning bottles, as especially honest things (while bushels are to the contrary), and the tendency of all Scripture is such—whichever Testament you take—that no man in his wits can doubt it. And though I never read the Koran, and only have heard some verses of it, I know enough to say positively, that Mahomet began this movement to establish Antichrist.

However, my groom said that Parson Chowne, though not such a fool as to stop other people, scarcely ever took a drop himself; and his main delight was to make low beasts of the clergy who had no self-command. And two or three years ago he had played a trick on his brother parsons, such as no man would ever have tried who took his own glass in moderation and enjoyed it heartily, as Scripture even commands us to do, to promote good-fellowship and discretion. Having a power of visitation, from some faculty he enjoyed, he sent all round to demand their presence at a certain time, for dinner. All the parsons were glad enough, especially as their wives could not, in good manners, be invited, because there was now no Mrs Chowne. And they saw a rare chance to tell good stories, and get on without the little snaps which are apt to occur among ladies. Therefore they all appeared in strength, having represented it as a high duty, whatever their better halves might think. When a parson says this, his wife must knock under, or never go to church again. Being there, they were treated well, and had the good dinner they all deserved, and found their host very different from what they had been led to expect of him. He gave them as much wine as they needed, and a very good wine too. He let

them tell their stories, though his own taste was quite different; and he even humoured them so as to laugh the while he was despising them. And though he could not bear tobacco, that and pipes were brought in for them.

All went smoothly until one of them, edged on by the others, called for spirits and hot water. This Master Chowne had prepared for, of course, and meant to present the things in good time; but now being gored thus in his own house, the devil entered into him. His dark face grew of a leaden colour, while he begged their pardon. Then out he went to Mother Steelyard, and told her exactly what to do. Two great jacks of brown brandy came in, and were placed upon the table, and two silver kettles upon the hobs. He begged all his guests to help themselves, showing the lemons and sugar-caddy, the bottles, and kettles, and everything: and then he left them to their own devices, while he talked with Parson Jack, who had dropped in suddenly.

Now, what shall I tell you came to pass—as a very great traveller always says—why, only that these parsons grew more drunk than despair, or even hope. Because, in the silver kettles was not water, but whisky at boiling-point, and the more they desired to weaken their brandy, the more they

fortified it; until they tumbled out all together, in every state of disorder. For this he had prepared, by placing at the foot of his long steps half-a-dozen butts of liquid from the cleaning of his drains, meant to be spread on the fields next day. And into the whole of this they fell, and he bolted the doors upon them.

This made a stir in the clerical circles, when it came to be talked about; but upon reference to the bishop, he thought they had better say nothing about it, only be more considerate. And on the whole it redounded greatly to the credit of Parson Chowne.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

WAITING AND LEARNING.

WHAT this great man now said to me had better not be set down perhaps; because it proved him incapable of forming due estimate of my character. Enough that he caused me some alarm and considerable annoyance by his supercilious vein, and assumption of evil motives. Whereas you could not find anywhere purer or loftier reasons, and I might say, more poetical ones, than those which had led me to abstain from speaking of the fair young lady. However, as this Chowne had learned all about her, from some skulking landsman, whom he maintained as a spy at the back of the premises, it was certain that I could in no way harm her, by earning a trifle of money in front, in a thoroughly open and disciplined way. And it might even lie in my power thereby to defeat the devices of enemies, and rescue this

beautiful young female from any one who would dare to think of presuming to injure her.

I found my breast and heart aglow with all the fine feeling of younger days, the moment the above occurred to me; and it would not have cost me two blows to knock down any man who misunderstood me. However, his Reverence did not afford me any chance for this exercise; but seemed to allow me the benefit which such ideas afford a man; and promised to give me three half-crowns, instead of five shillings a-week, as before.

He allowed me a hayloft to sleep in that night, after taking good care that I had not even a flint to strike a light with. For, cordially as he did enjoy the firing of an enemy's barns or stacks, his Reverence never could bear the idea of so much as a spark coming near his own. And the following morning I saddled my horse, with a good chain undergirding, and taking turn and turn about, got home to the Rose of Devon.

And here I found very unjust work, Fuzzy gone, and Ike not to be found, and the ketch laid up for the winter. Only Bang, the boy, was left, and the purpose of his remaining was to bear me a wicked message. Namely, that I had been so much away, both in the boat and on horseback, that the captain

would not be bound to me, except to get home again, how I might. And if this could not be brought about, and I chose to take care of the ketch for the winter, two shillings a-week was what I might draw, also the wood on the wharf, so long as it would last for firing; and any fish I could catch with lines; and any birds I could shoot on the river, with a stone of rock-powder that was in the hold.

Bang was ashamed to deliver this message; and I cannot describe to you my wrath, as slowly I wrung it out of him. His head went into his neck almost, for fear of my taking it by the handles, which nature had provided in his two ears, and letting him learn (as done once before) that the mast had harder knots in it. But I always scorn injustice; and Bang was not to be blamed for this. So I treated him kindly; as I might wish a boy of my own to be treated by a man of large experience. And I let him go home to his mother's house, which was said to be somewhere within a league, and then I went to see what manners had been shown in the pickling-tub.

Here I found precious little indeed, and only the bottom stuff of coxcombs, tails, and nails, and over-harpings, thready bits, and tapeworm stuff, such as we pray deliverance from, unless it comes to famine. Nevertheless, in my now condition I grieved that

there was not more of it. Because how could I get across to my native land again? All the small coasting-craft were laid up, as if they were china for shelfing, immediately after that gale of wind, which (but for me) must have capsized us. These fellows up the rivers never get a breath of seamanship. Sudden squalls are all they think of. Sea-room, and the power of it, they would be afraid of.

At one time I thought of walking home, because none of these traders would venture it; and if I had only a guinea to start with on the road to Bristol, nothing could have stopped me. For, say what I might to myself about it, and reason however carefully, I could not reconcile with my conscience these things that detained me. The more I considered only three half-crowns, and the mere chance of wild-ducks on the river, the less I perceived how my duty lay, and the more it appeared to be movable. And why was I bound to stop here like this, when their place was to take me home again, according to stipulation? To apply to the mayor, as I knew, was useless, especially now that I owed him a bill; as for the bench of magistrates, one had already a bias against me, because I went into a wood one night to watch an eclipse of the moon, and took my telescope; which they all swore was a gun! Being

disappointed with the moon's proceedings, I slammed up my telescope hastily, and at the same time puffed my pipe; and there was a fellow on watch so vile as to swear to the sound and the smoke of a gun! And this fellow proved to be a Welshman of the name of Llewellyn, and a cousin of mine within seven generations! I acquit him of knowing this fact at the time; and when in cross-examination I let him know it, and nobody else, he came back to his duty, and swore white all the black he had sworn before. Nevertheless I did not like it (though acquitted amidst universal applause) on account of the notoriety; and finding him one night upon the barge walk, and his manners irritating, I was enabled to impress him with a sense of consanguinity. And after that I might bear my telescope, and take observations throughout the coverts, whenever the pheasants did not disturb me.

This privilege, and a flight of wild-ducks, followed by a team of geese, and rumours even of two wild swans, moderated my desire to be back at home again. There no man can get a shot, except in very bitter weather, or when the golden plovers come in, unless he likes to take on himself a strong defiance of public opinion. Because Colonel Lougher is so kind, and so forbears to prosecute, that to shoot his

game is no game at all, and shames almost any man afterwards. And the glory of all that night-work is, the sense of wronging somebody.

Moreover, a little thing occurred, which, in my doubt of conclusion, led me to stay a bit longer. Some people may think nothing of it, but a kind touch takes a hold on me. I have spoken of a boy, by the name of Bang, possessing many good qualities, yet calling for education. Of this I had given him some little, administered not to his head alone, but to more influential quarters; and the result was a crop of gratitude watered by humility. When he went home for the winter months, I expected to hear no more of him, having been served in that manner often by boys whom I have corrected. Therefore all who have ever observed the want of thankfulness in the young, will enter into my feelings when an ancient woman, Bang's grandmother, hailed me in a shaky voice over the side of my ketch, with Bang in the distance watching her. Between her feet was a good large basket, which with my usual fine feeling I leaped out to ease her of. But on no account would she let me touch it, until she knew more about me.

"Be you the man?" she said.

"Madam," I answered, "I be the man."

"The man as goes on so wicked to Bang, for the sake of his soul hereafter?"

"Yes, madam, I am he who clothed in the wholesome garb of severity a deep and parental affection;" for now I smelled something uncommonly good.

"Be you the chap as wolloped him?"

"That I can proudly say I am."

"Look 'e see, here, this be for 'e, then!"

With no common self-approval, I observed what she turned out; although I longed much to unpack them myself, for fear of her spoiling anything. But she put me back in a wholesale manner, and spread it all out like a market-stand. And really it was almost enough to make a market of; for she was a very wiry old woman, and Bang had helped carry, as far as the wharf, when he saw me, and fled. Especially did I admire a goose, fat with golden fat upon him, trussed, and laid on stuffing-herbs. Also, a little pig for roasting, too young to object to it, yet with his character formed enough to make his brains delicious. And as for sausages—but no more.

The goodness of these things preserved me from going off on the tramp just yet. That is the last thing a sailor should do, though gifted with an iron-tipped wooden leg. The Government drove me into

it once, when my wound allowed me to be discharged; but it took more out of my self-respect than ever I have recovered. And if I do anything under the mark (which, to my knowledge, I never do), it dates from the time the King drove me to alms. However, I never do dwell upon that, unless there is something wrong down in my hold; and when that is right, I am thankful again. And none of that ever befalls me, when I get my rations regular. But who cares to hear any more about me, with all these great things coming on? You may look on me now as nobody.

Because I fell so much beneath my own idea of myself, and all that others said of me, through my nasty want of strength, when Parson Chowne came over me. It is easy enough to understand that a man, in good-nature, may knock under to another man of good-nature also; all in friendship and in fun, and for the benefit of the world. But for a man of intellect not so very far under the average—as will now be admitted of me, in spite of all inborn diffidence—as well as a man of a character formed and framed by experience, now to be boarded and violently driven under hatches, without any power to strike a blow, by a man who was never on board of a ship—at any rate to my knowledge; to think of

this and yet not help it, made me chafe like a fellow in irons.

There was one thing, however, that helped to make me put up with my present position a little, and that was my hope to be truly of service to my genuine benefactor, poor Sir Philip Bampfylde. This old gentleman clearly was not going on very comfortably; and Parson Chowne had given me to understand, without any words, that the great chest landed at the end of his house, was full of arms and all other treason. These were to be smuggled in, after the Captain's departure; and the Captain would not enter the house, through fear of the servants suspecting something.

I could not reconcile this account with what I had seen the young lady do, and the Captain's mode of receiving it; but as I would not tell the Parson a word about that young lady, I could not make that objection to him. Nor did I say, though I might have done so, that I would not and could not believe for a moment that any British naval captain would employ his ship and crew for a purpose of high treason to his lawful master. That Parson Chowne should dare to think that I would swallow such stuff as that, made me angry with myself for not having contradicted him. But all this time I was very wise, and had no call to

reproach myself. Seldom need any man repent for not having said more than he did; and never so needeth a Welshman.

And now, though I still took observation of Narnton Court (as in honour bound to deserve my salary), and though the Parson still rode down, and went the round of the deck at times when nobody could expect him; yet it was not in my nature to be kept from asking something as to all these people. You may frighten a man, and scare his wits, and keep him under, and trample on him, and even beat his feelers down, and shut him up like a jellyfish; but, after all this, if he is a man, he will want to know the reason. For this makes half of the difference between man and the lower animals:—the latter, when punished, accept it as a thing that must befall them; and so do the negroes, and all proper women: but a man always wants to know why it must be; though it greatly increases his trouble to ask, and still more to tell it again, if you please.

Sir Philip Bampfylde, as every one said, was a very nice gentleman indeed, the head of an ancient family, and the owner of a large estate. Kind, moreover, and affable, though perhaps a little stately, from having long held high command and important rank in the army. Some years ago he had attained even to the

rank of general, which is the same thing among land-forces as an admiral is with us; and he was so proud of this position, that he always wished to be so addressed, rather than by the title which had been so long in the family. For his argument was that he had to thank good fortune for being a baronet, whereas good conduct and perseverance alone could have made him a general. Now if these had made him an admiral, I would always entitle him so: as it is, I shall call him "Sir Philip," or "General," just as may happen to come to my mind. Now this gentleman had two sons, and no other children; the elder was Philip Bampfylde, Esquire, and the younger Captain Drake Bampfylde, of whom I have spoken already. Philip, the heir, had been appointed to manage the family property, which spread for miles and miles away; and this gave him quite enough to do, because his father for years and years was away on foreign service. And during this time Squire Philip married a lady of great beauty, sent home by his father from foreign parts after rescue from captivity. She was of very good extraction, so far as foreigners can be, and a princess (they said) in her own right, though without much chance of getting it. And she spoke the prettiest broken English, being very sensitive.

Well, everything thus far went purely enough and

the lady had brought him a pair of twins, and was giving good promise of going on, and everybody was pleased with her, and most of all her husband, and Sir Philip was come home from governorship, but only on leave of absence, and they were trying hard to persuade him now to retire and live in peace, when who should come with his evil luck to spoil everything, but Drake Bampfylde? How it came to pass was not clearly known, at least to the folk on our side of the river, or those whom I met in Barnstaple. And I durst not ask on the further side, that is to say around Narnton Court, because the Parson's spies were there. Only the old women felt pretty sure that they had heard say, though it might be wrong, that Captain Drake Bampfylde had drowned the children, some said by accident, some said on purpose, and buried them somewhere on Braunton Burrows. And the effect of this on the foreign lady, being as she was, poor thing, might have been foreseen almost. For she fell into untimely pains, and neither herself nor her babe survived, exactly as happened to my son's wife.

This was a very sad story, I thought, but they said that the worst of it still lay behind: for poor Squire Philip had been so upset by the hurry of all these misfortunes, that nobody knew what to do with him.

He always had been a most warm-hearted man, foolishly fond of his wife and children, and of a soft and retiring nature. Moreover, he looked on his younger brother, who had seen so much more of the world than himself, and was of a bolder character, not with an elder son's usual carelessness, but with a thorough admiration. And when he found him behave in this manner (according, at least, to what every one said), and all for the sake of the property, without a sharp word between them, it went to his heart, in the thick of his losses, so that he was beside himself. He let his beard grow and his hair turn white, although he was not yet forty, and he put up the shutters of his room, and kept candles around him, and little dolls. He refused to see his brother Drake, and his father Sir Philip, and everybody, except his own attendant, and the nurse of his poor children. And finding this, the Captain left the house, as if cursed out of it.

The only one who took things bravely was the ancient General. Much as he grieved at the loss of his race, and extinction, perhaps, of the family, he swore that he never would be cast down, or doubt the honour of his favourite son, until that son confessed it. This Drake Bampfylde had never done, although the case was hard against him, and scarcely any one,

except his father, now stood up for him. But of the few who still held him guiltless, was one especial comforter; Isabel Carey to wit, a young lady of very good Devonshire family, left as a ward to Sir Philip Bampfylde, and waiting for three or four years more of age, to come into large estates in South Devon.

The general people did not know this; but I happened to get ahead of them; and having a knack in my quiet way of putting two and two together, also having seen the Captain, and shaped my opinions, I would have staked my boat against a cuttle-fish that he was quite innocent. If the children were found buried—although I could never quite get at this, but only a story of a man who had seen him doing it, as I shall tell hereafter—but even supposing them deep in the sand (which I was a little inclined to do, from trusting my spy-glass so thoroughly), yet there might have been other people quite as likely to put them there as that unlucky Captain Drake.

It has been my lot to sail under a great many various captains, not only whom I have hinted at in the days when I was too young for work, but whom I mean to describe hereafter in my far greater experiences; really finding (although I have tried to convince people to the contrary) that what they have told me was perfectly true, and that I come out far

stronger and better whenever my reins are tried and proved; and my loins as sound as a bell, although hereditary from King David. Let that pass. I find one fault, and it is the only one to be found with me; it is that the style of our bards will come out, and spread me abroad in their lofty allusions.

To come back to these captains. I never found one who would do such a thing as kill and slay two children, much less dig their graves in the sand, and come home to dinner afterwards. And of all the captains I had seen, Drake Bampfylde seemed as unfit as any to do a thing of that dirtiness. However, as I have not too much trust in human nature (after the way it has used me, and worst of all when in the Government), I said to myself that it was important to know at what time this Captain Bampfylde won the love of that fine Miss Carey. Because, after that, he had no temptation to put the little ones out of the way; and I quite settled it in my own mind, that if they had set up their horses together, before the young children went out of the world, Captain Drake Bampfylde was not likely to have made them go so. For that fair maiden's estates, I was told, would feed four hundred people.

No one had seen this, exactly as I did, nor could I beat it into them; and I found from one or two

symptoms that it was high time for me to leave off talking. Parson Chowne came down one night, as black as a tarred thunderbolt, and though he said nothing to let me know, I felt afraid of his meaning. Also Parson Jack rode down, in his headlong careless way, and filled his pipe from my tobacco-bag, and gave me a wink, and said, "Keep your mouth shut." It was always a pleasure to me to behold him; whatever his principles may have been, and if I could have said a word to stop him from his downward road, or to make it go less sudden, goodness knows I would have done it, at the risk of three half-crowns a-week.

CHAPTER XXXV.

THE POLITE FERRYMAN.

Now, for a man of my age and knowledge, keeping an eye on his own concerns, and under the eyes of a good many women (eager to have him, because confessed superior to the neighbourhood, yet naturally doubtful how much money would be wanted), for such a man to attend to things which could not concern him in any way, without neglecting what now he had found a serious matter at his time of life—this, to my mind, proves a breadth of sympathy rarely found outside of Wales.

Entering into these things largely, and desiring to do my best, having, moreover, nought else to do except among dabs and flounders, I was led by a naturally active mind to try to turn a penny; not for my own good so much as for the use of Bunny. Therefore, having the punt at command, and a good pair of oars, and a good pair of arms, what did I do

but set up a ferry, such as had never been heard of before, and never might have been dreamed of, except for my intelligence? Because we had two miles to Barnstaple Bridge, and no bridge at all to be found below us, and a good many houses here and there, on either side of the river. And I saw that they must know one another, and were longing to dine or to gossip together, except for the water between them, or the distance to walk all the way by the bridge. So being left in this desolate state, and shamefully treated by Captain Fuzzy, and Bang's grandmother now neglecting me, at a period of sadness, while smoking a pipe, Providence gave me this brilliant idea.

I never had dreamed for a moment of settling without something permanent; and not even £30 a-year would tempt me to do any despite to my late dear wife's remembrance. A year and a day at the very least was I resolved to mourn for her: still, as the time was drawing on, I desired to have some prospect. Not to settle rashly, as young people do in such affairs (which really should be important), but to begin to feel about, and put the price against the weight, and then take time to think about it. Only I had made up my mind not to look twice at the very richest and most beautiful Methodist. Enough

had I had for my life of them, and the fellows that come after them: Church of England, or Church of Rome, for me this time at any rate; with preference to the latter because having no chapel in our neighbourhood.

And I worked this ferry, if you will believe me, not for the sake of the twopence both ways, half so much as because of my thoughts of the confidence that I must create. I knew for I won't say forty years, but at any rate good thirty, what women are the very moment they must needs come into a boat. The very shyest and wisest of them are at the mercy of a man right out. And I never could help believing that they come for that very reason. I know all their queerness of placing their toes, and how they fetch their figures up, and manage to hitch their petticoats, and try to suppose they are quite on a balance, and then go down plump on the nearest thwart, and pretend that they did it on purpose. Nevertheless they are very good; and we are bound to make the best of them.

When I told Parson Chowne of my ferry-boat, rather than let him find it out, which of course must have happened immediately, a quick gleam of wrath at my daring to do such a thing without consulting him moved in the depth of his great black eyes. At

least I believed so, but was not sure; for I never could bear to look straight at his eyes, as I do to all other people, especially Anthony Stew, Esquire. I thought that my ferry would be forbidden; but with his usual quickness he saw that it might serve his purpose in several ways. Because it would help to keep me there, as well as account for my being there, and afford me the best chance in the world of watching the river traffic. So he changed his frown to an icy smile, such as I never could smile at, and said—

"Behold now what good-luck comes of my service! Only remember, no fares to be taken when the tide serves for you know what. And especially no gossiping."

This being settled to my content, I took a great piece of loose tarpaulin out of the hold of the Rose of Devon, and with a bucket of thick lime-whiting explained to the public in printing letters, each as large as a marlin-spike, who I was, and of what vocation, and how thoroughly trustworthy. And let any one read it, and then give opinion in common fairness, whether any man capable of being considered a spy would ever have done such a thing as this:—

"David Llewellyn, Mariner of the Royal Navy, Ferryman to King George the IIId. Each way or

both ways only Twopence. Ladies put carefully over the Mud. Live Fish on hand at an hour's notice, and of the choicest Quality." This last statement was not quite so accurate as I could have desired. To oblige the public, I kept the fish too long on hand occasionally, because I never had proper notice when it might be wanted. And therefore no reasonable person ever took offence at me.

One fine day towards the frosty time, who should appear at my landing-stage on the further side of the river, just by the lime-kiln not far from the eastern end of Narnton Court—who but a beautiful young lady with her maid attending her? The tide was out, and I was crossing with a good sixpennyworth, that being all that my boat would hold, unless it were of children. And seeing her there, I put on more speed, so as not to keep her waiting. When I had carried my young women over the mud and received their twopences, I took off my hat to the fair young lady, who had kept in the background, and asked to what part I might have the honour of conveying her ladyship.

"I am not a ladyship," she answered, with a beautiful bright smile; "I am only a common lady; and I think you must be an Irishman."

This I never am pleased to hear, because those

Irish are so untruthful; however, I made her another fine bow, and let her have her own way about it.

"Then, Mr Irishman," she continued; "you are so polite, we will cross the water. No, no, thank you," as I offered to carry her; "you may carry Nanette, if she thinks proper. Nanette has the greatest objection to mud; but I am not quite so particular." And she tripped with her little feet over the bank too lightly to break the green cake of the ooze.

"You sall elave me, my good man," said Nanette, who was rather a pretty French girl; "Mamselle can afford to defigure her dress; but I can no such thing do at all."

Meanwhile the young lady was in the boat, sitting in the stern-sheets like a lieutenant, and laughing merrily at Nanette, who was making the prettiest fuss in the world, not indeed with regard to her legs, which an English girl would have considered first, but as to her frills and fripperies; and smelling my quid, she had no more sense than to call me a coachman, or something like it. However, I took little heed of her, although her figure was very good; for I knew that she could not have sixpence, and scarcely a hundred a-year would induce me to de-

grade myself down to a real French wife. For how could I expect my son ever to be a sailor?

Now as I pulled, and this fine young lady, who clearly knew something about a boat, nodded her head to keep time with me, and showed her white teeth as she smiled at herself, my own head was almost turned, I declare; and I must have blushed, if it could have been that twenty years of the fish-trade had left that power in me. Because this young lady was so exactly what my highest dreams of a female are, and never yet realised in my own scope. And her knowledge of a boat, and courage, and pleasant contempt of that French chit who had dared to call me a "coachman," when added to her way of looking over the water with fine feeling (such as I very often have, and must have shown it long ago), also the whole of this combined with a hat of a very fine texture indeed, such as I knew for Italian, and a feather that curled over golden pennon of hair in the wind like a Spanish ensign; and not only these things, but a face, and manner, and genuine beauty of speech, not to be found in a million of women,—after dwelling on all these things both steadily and soberly, over my last drop of grog, before I went into my berth that night, and prayed for the sins of the day to go upward, what

do you think I said on the half-deck, and with all the stars observing me—"I'm damned if I'll serve Parson Chowne any more." I said it, and I swore it.

And when I came to think of it, in a practical manner, next morning, and to balance the ins and outs, and what I might come to, if thus led astray, by a man in holy orders (yet whose orders were all unholy, at any rate, such as he gave to me), and when I reflected on three half-crowns for finding me in everything, and then remembered how I had turned two guineas in a day, when poor Bardie came to me, and with a conscience as clear as a spent cuttlefish; and never a sign of my heels behind me, when squeamish customers sat down to dinner; also good Mother Jones with sweet gossip, while my bit of flesh was grilling, and my little nip of rum, and the sound of Bunny snoring, while I smoked a pipe and praised myself; also the pleasure of doubting whether they could do without me at the "Jolly" through the wall, and the certain knowledge how the whole of the room would meet me, if I could deny myself enough to go among them;—these things made me lose myself, as in this sentence I have done, in longing to find old times and places, and old faces, once again, and some one to call me "Old Dyo."

Now who would believe that the whole of all this was wrought in my not very foolish mind, by the sight of a beautiful high-bred face, and the sound of a very sweet softening voice? Also the elegant manner in which she never asked what the passage would come to, but gave me a bright and true half-crown for herself and that frippery French girl. I must be a fool; no doubt I am, when the spirit of ancestors springs within me, spoiling all trade; as an inborn hiccough ruins the best pipe that ever was filled. For though I owed three tidy bills, I had no comfort until I drilled a little hole in that bright half-crown, and hung it with my charms and knobs and caul inside my Jersey. And thus the result became permanent, and my happiness was in my heart again, and all my self-respect leaped up as ready to fight as it ever had been, when I had shaped a firm resolve to shake off Chowne, like the devil himself.

I cannot imagine a lower thing than for any man to say—and some were even to that degree base—that I thus resolved upon calculation, and ability now to get on without him, and balance of his three half-crowns against the income of my ferry, with which I admit that his work interfered. Neither would any but a very vile man dare to cast reflec-

tions upon me, for having created by skill and eloquence a small snug trade in the way of fish, and of those birds which are sent by the Lord in a casual way, and without any ownership, for the good of us unestated folk. While I deny as unequivocally as if upon oath before magistrates, that more than fifty hares and pheasants—but there! I may go on for ever rebutting those endless charges and calumnies, which the mere force of my innocent candour seems to strike out of maliciousness. Once for all, I never poach, I never stab salmon, I never smuggle, I never steal boats, I never sell fish with any stink outside of it,—and how can I tell what it does inside, or what it may do afterwards?—I never tell lies to anybody who does not downright call for it; and you may go miles and miles, I am sure, to find a more thoroughly honourable, good-hearted, brave, and agreeable man.

Now I did not mean to say any of this, when I began about it; neither am I in the habit of deigning even to clear myself; but once beginning with an explanation, I found it the best to start clear again; because Parson Chowne, and my manner towards him (which for the life of me I could not help), also my service under him, and visit at his house, and so on, and even my liking for Parson Jack (after his

sale to Satan, though managed without his privity), as well as my being had up for shooting pheasants with a telescope;—these and many other things, too small now to dwell upon, may have spread a cloud betwixt my poor self and my readers; and a cloud whose belly is a gale of wind.

It is not that I ever could do any unworthy action. It is simply that I can conceive the possibility of it seeming so to those who have never met me; and who from my over-candid account (purposely shaped dead against myself) may be at a loss to enter into the delicacies of my conduct. But you shall see by-and-by; and seeing is believing.

Now it was a lucky thing, that on the very morning after I had made my mind up so, and before it was altered much, down came Chowne in a tearing mood, with his beautiful black mare all in a lather. I was on board of the Rose of Devon, smoking my first after-breakfast pipe, and counting my cash from the ferry business of the day before—except, of course, the half-crown which lay among my charms, and strengthened me. The ketch was aground in a cradle of sand, which she had long ago scooped for herself, and which she seldom got out of now, except just to float at the top of the springs. She stood almost on an even keel, unless it were blowing

heavily. Our punt (or rather I should call her mine by this time, for of course she most justly belonged to me, after all their breach of contract, and desertion of their colours)—at any rate, there she was afloat and ready for any passenger, while my notice to the public flapped below the mainboom of the ketch.

"You precious rascal," cried Chowne, from the wharf, with his horse staring at the tarpaulin, and half inclined to shy from it; "who was it crossed the river twice in your rotten ferry-boat yesterday?"

"Please your Reverence," I answered, calmly puffing at my pipe, which I knew would still more infuriate him: "will your Reverence give me time to think? Let me see—why, let me see—there was Mother Pugsley from up the hill, and Mother Bidgood from round the corner, and Farmer Skinner, and young Joe Thorne, and Eliza Tucker from the mill, and Jenny Stribling, and Honor Jose, first cousin to our captain, and — well I think that's nearly all that I know the name of, your Reverence."

"I thought you knew me better now than to lie to me, Llewellyn. You know what I mean as well as I do."

"To be sure, to be sure, your Reverence; I beg your pardon altogether. I ought to have remembered poor old Nanny Gotobed."

The wharf was high, and our gunwale below it;

he put his mare at it, clapped in the spurs, and before I could think or even wonder, he had me by the nape of the neck, with his knuckles grinding into me, and his face, now ashy white with rage, fixed on me, so that I could not move.

"Will you tell me?" he cried.

"I won't," said I; crack came his hunting-whip round my sides—crack, and wish, and crack again; then I caught up a broken spar, and struck him senseless over the tail of his horse. The mare ramped all round the half-deck mad, then leaped ashore, with her legs all bloody, and scoured away with her saddle off.

Chowne lay so long insensible, that a cold sweat broke through the heat of my wrath, to think that I had killed him. And but for his hat, I had done no less, for I struck with the strength of a maddened man, and the spar was of heavy Dantzic. I untied his neckcloth, and ran for water, and propped him up, and bathed his forehead, although my hands were trembling so that I could scarcely hold the swab. And now as I watched his pale stern face without a weak line in it even from fainting, I was amazed at having ever dared to lift hand against him. But what Royal Navyman could ever put up with horsewhip?

At last he fetched a strong breath, and opened the usual wickedness of his eyes, and knew me at once, but did not know exactly what had befallen him. I have had a good deal to do with knocking down a good many men, and know that such is their usual practice; and that if you take them promptly then, they will sometimes believe things very freely. Therefore I said, "Your Reverence has contrived to hit yourself very hard, but I hope you will soon be better again."

"Hit myself! Why, somebody hit me!" and then he went off again into a doze, from the buzzing of his head perhaps. Perceiving that he would soon come to himself, and desiring to be acquitted of any violent charge of battery, I jumped down into the hold and fetched an old boom that was lying there, and hoisted it up in the tackle-fall, so as to hang at about the right height. Moreover, I put the spar well away; and then, with a sluice of water, I fetched his Reverence back to himself again. I found him very correct this time, and beginning to look about pretty briskly, therefore I turned him away and said, "Your Reverence must not look at it—it will make your head go round again; either shut your eyes or look away, your Worship."

He seemed not to notice me, so I went on, "Your

Reverence has had a narrow escape. What a mercy your head is not broken! Your Reverence went to chastise me, and lo! your horse reared and threw your Reverence against that great boom which that lubberly Jose has left there ever since we broke cargo."

"You are a liar," he said; "you struck me. To the last day of your life you shall rue it."

The voice of his throat ran cold all through me, being so low and so cold itself; and the strength of his eyes was coming back, and the bitter disdain of his countenance. The devil, who wanted him for a rare morsel in the way of cannibalism, stood at my elbow; but luckily thought it sweeter not to hurry it. The foulest man on all God's earth, who made a scoff of mercy's self, lay at my mercy for a minute, defied it, took it, and hated it. For the sake of myself, I let him go. For the sake of mankind, I should have slain him.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

UNDER FAIRER AUSPICES.

KNOWING now what I had to expect from Parson Chowne and from all his train (whether clothed or naked), and even perhaps from Parson Jack, who lay beneath his thumb so much, and who could thrash me properly; I seized the chance of a good high tide, and gave a man sixpence to help me, and warped the Rose of Devon to a berth where she could float and swing, and nobody come a-nigh her without a boat or a swimming-bout. Because I knew from so many folk what a fiend I had to deal with, and that his first resort for vengeance (haply through his origin) generally was to fire. They told me that when he condescended to do duty in either church—for two he had, as I may have said—all the farmers took it for a call to have their ricks burned. They durst not stay away from church, to save the very lives of them, nor could they leave their wives be-

hind, on account of the unclothed people: all they could hope was that no offence had come from their premises, since last service. The service he held just as suited his mood; sometimes three months, and the church-door locked; sometimes three Sundays one after the other, man, woman, and child demanded. Whenever this happened, the congregation knew that the parish had displeased him, and that he wanted them all in church; while his boy was at the stackyards. He never deigned to preach, but made the prayers themselves a comedy, singing them up to the clerk's "amen," and the neigh of his mare from the vestry.

I cannot believe even half that I hear from the very best authority; therefore I set nothing down which may be over-coloured. But the following story I know to be true, because seven people have told it me, and not any two very different. Two or three bishops and archdeacons (or deacons of arches, I know not which, at any rate high free-masons) desired to know some little more about a man in their jurisdiction eminent to that extent, and equally notorious. They meant no harm at all, but just to take a little feel of him. Because he had come to visitation, once or twice when summoned, with his huntsman and his hounds, and himself in leathern breeches.

There must have been something amiss in this, or at any rate they thought so; and his lordship, a bishop just appointed, made up his mind to tackle him. He came in a coach-and-four, and wearing all his high canonicals, and they managed somehow to get up the hill, and appear at Nympton Rectory. Then a footman struck the door with a gold stick well embossed; and he struck again, and he struck again, more in dudgeon every time.

Because no man had yet been seen, nor woman on the premises; only dogs very wild and mad, but kept away from biting. "Strike again," said his lordship, nodding under his wig, with some courtesy; "we must never be impatient. Jemmy, strike again, my lad." Jemmy struck a thundering stroke, and out came Mrs Steelyard. She looked at them all, and then she said, with her eyes full on the Bishop's, "Are you robbers, or are you savages? My master in that state and you do this!" And they all saw that she could not weep, by reason of too much sorrow. "It is the Lord Bishop," said the footman, keeping a little away from her. "Excellent female," began his Lordship, spreading his hands in a habit learned according to his duties, "tell your master that his *Jehoshaphat wishes to see him." "Mr

* ? Diocesan.

Jehoshaphat," she replied, "you are just in time, and no more, sir. How we have longed for a minister! You are just in time and no more, sir. Will you have the kindness to come this way, and to step as quietly as you can?" His Lordship liked not the look of this; being, however, a resolute man, he followed the stony woman up the staircase, and into a bedroom with the window-curtains three quarters drawn. And here he found a pastille burning, and a lot of medicine-bottles, and a Bible on the table open, and on it a pair of spectacles. In the bed lay some one, with a face of fire heavily blotched with bungs of black, and all his body tossing with spasms and weak groaning. "What means this?" asked his Lordship, drawing considerably nearer to the door. "Only the *plague," said the stony woman; "he was took with it yesterday; doctor says he may last two hours more almost, particular if he can get anybody to take the symptoms off him. I expect to be down with it some time to-night, because I feel the tingling. But your Highness will stop and help us." "I am damned if I will," cried the Bishop, sinking both manners and dignity in the

* There are several entries of deaths from plague in parish registers of North Devon, circa 1790. Perhaps it was what they now call "black fever," the most virulent form of typhus.

violence of alarm; and he ran down the stairs at such a pace that his apron-strings burst, and he left it behind, and he jumped into the coach with his two feet foremost, and slammed up the windows, and ordered full speed. Then Parson Chowne rose, and threw off his mask, and drew back the window-curtain, and sat in his hunting-clothes, and watched with his usual bitter smile the rapid departure of his foe. And he had the Bishop's apron framed, and hung it in the parsonage hall, from a red-deer's antlers, with the name and date below. And so of that Bishop he heard no more.

Now a man who had beaten three bishops, and all the archdeacons in the country, was of course tenfold of a match for me; and when he rode down smoothly to me, as he did in a few days' time, and never touched on our little skirmish, except with a sort of playful hit (so far as his haughty mind could play), and riding another horse without a word about the mischief which his favourite mare had taken, and demanded, as a matter of justice, that having quitted his service now, I should pay back seven-and-six-pence drawn in advance for wages, I was obliged to touch my hat, as if I had never made stroke at his, or put my knee upon him. He had flogged me to such purpose that I ever must admire him; for the

flick of the boatswain's lash was a tickle compared to what Chowne took out of me; and if I must tell the whole truth, I was prouder of having knocked down such a wonderful man than of all of my victories put together. But one of my weak and unreasonable views of life is this, that having thrashed a man, I feel a great power of goodwill to him, and a desire to give him quarter, and the more so the less he cries for it.

But, on the whole, I was not so young, after all that was said by everybody, as to imagine for a moment that I had felt the last of him. The very highest in the land had been compelled to yield to him; as when he turned out my Lord G——'s horses from the stabling ordered at Lord G——'s inn. Would such a man accept defeat from a crazy old mariner like me? Feeling my danger, and meaning never to knock under any more, I refused, as a matter of principle, to restore so much as a halfpenny; and if I understand law at all, he was bound to give me another week's wages, in default of notice. However, I could not get it; and therefore am glad to quit such trifles.

From all experience it was known that this man never hurried vengeance. He knew that he was sure to get it; and he liked to dwell upon it, thus pro-

longing his enjoyment by the means of hope. He loved, as in the case of that unfortunate Captain Vellacott, to persuade his enemies that he had forgiven, or at least forgotten them, and then to surprise them, and laugh to himself at their ignorance of his nature. So I felt pretty sure that I had some time till my life would be in danger. For, of course, he knew that my ferry business, growing in profit daily, would keep me within his reach for the present, over and above the difficulty of getting across the Channel now. However, he began upon me sooner than I expected, on account, perhaps, of my low degree.

But in the meanwhile, feeling sure that I could not stand worse with him than I did—desiring, moreover, to ease my conscience, and perhaps improve my income, by an act of justice—I crossed the river to Narnton Court, and getting among the servants nicely, sent word in to Miss Isabel Carey that the old ferryman begged leave to see her upon business most particular. For, of course (although, in the hurry of things, I may have forgotten to mention it), the lovely young lady I ferried across, and whose name I was thrashed so for not betraying, was Captain Drake's sweetheart, the ward of Sir Philip.

One of the most hateful things in Chowne was, that he never did anything in the good old-fashioned

manner, unless it were use of the horsewhip. And it now rejoiced my heart almost to be shown into a fine dark room, by the side of good long passages, with a footman going before me, and showing legs of a quite superior order, and then under my instructions boldly throwing an oaken door wide, and announcing, "Mr David Llewellyn, ma'am!"

For though I had left Felix Farley behind, from a sort of romantic bashfulness, I had seen in the hall a coloured gentleman, who seemed justly popular; therefore I had just dropped a hint (not meant to go any further) concerning my risk of life and fortitude for the sake of black men. And this made the women admire me, for it turned out that this worthy negro stood high in the house, and had saved some cash. The room which I entered was large and high, with an amazing number of books in it, and smelling exceeding learned. And there in a deep window sat the young lady, with the light from the river glancing on the bright elegance of her hair. And when she rose and came towards me, I felt uncommonly proud of having been even thrashed for her sake: nor did I wonder at Captain Drake's warm manner of proceeding, or at Chowne's resolve to keep so jealous a watch over her. Over and above her beauty, which was no business of mine, of course,

she had such pretty eyebrows and so sweet a way of looking, that a thrill went to my experienced heart, in spite of all experience; and women seemed a different thing from what I was accustomed to.

Therefore I left her to begin; while I made bows, and felt afraid of giving offence by gazing. She, however, put me at my ease almost directly, having such a high-bred way, so clarified and gentle, that I neither could be distant nor familiar with her. Only to be quite at ease, like, respect, and love her. And this lady was only about seventeen! It is wonderful how they learn so much.

I need not follow all I said, or even what she said to me. Without for a moment sacrificing my true sense of dignity, I gave her to understand, very mildly, that I had seen something, and had taken a vague sense of its import, when I chanced to be after wild-ducks. Also that strong attempts had been made to set me spying after her, and that I might have yielded to them, but for my own lofty sense of being a victorious veteran, and the way in which I was conquered by her extraordinary beauty.

She seemed for a moment to doubt how far I should have touched that subject; and if I had only looked up she would have rung the bell decidedly. But I bowed, and kept down my eyelashes; which

were grey now, and helped me much in paying innocent compliments to every kind of woman. Even in the bar of very first-rate public-houses have I been pressed to take, and not pay for, glasses even of ancient stingo, because of the way I have paid respects, and looked through my shadows afterwards. Therefore this young lady said, "I hardly know what to do or say. Mr Llewellyn, it is a strange tale. Why should any one watch me?"

"That is more than I can say, my lady. I only know that the thing is done, and by a very wicked man indeed."

"And you have found it out, as ferryman? How clever of you, to be sure! And how honest to come and tell me! You have been a royal sailor?"

"In the Royal Navy, ma'am! Our captains are the most noble men, so brave, and glorious, and handsome! If you could only see one of them!"

"Perhaps I have," she said, under her breath, being carried away by my description, as I hoped to do to her; and then she came back through a shading of colours to herself, and looked at me, as if to say, "Have you detected me now?" I touched my lock; and by no means seemed to have dreamed a suspicion of anything.

"You are a most worthy man," she said; "and

wonderfully straightforward. None but a Royal Navy sailor could have behaved so nobly. In spite of all the bribes offered you——"

"No, no, no!" I cried; "nothing to speak of! nothing to speak of! What is a guinea and a half a-week when it touches a man's integrity?"

"Three guineas a-week you shall have at once; because you have behaved so nobly, and because you have fought for your country so, and been left with nothing (I think you said), with half of your lungs quite shot away, except twopence a-day to live upon!"

"One and eightpence farthing a-week, my lady; and to be signed by a clergyman; and twenty-eight miles to walk for it."

"It vexes me so to hear such things. Don't tell me any more of it. What is the use of having money except for the people who want it? Mr Llewellyn, you must try not to be offended."

I saw that there was something coming, but looked very grave about it. A man of my rank and mark must never be at all ready, and much less eager, to lay himself under any form of trifling obligation. And thoroughly as she had won me over, I tried very hard not to be offended, while she was going to a small black desk. If she had come thence with a

guinea or two, my mind was made up to do nothing more than gracefully wave it back again, and show myself hurt at such ignorance of me. But now when she came with a £5 note (such as Sir Philip seemed to keep in stock), my duty to Bardie and Bunny rose as upright as could be before my eyes, and overpowered all selfish niceties. I would not make a fuss about it, lest I might hurt her feelings, but placed it in my pocket with a bow of silent gratitude. Perhaps my face conveyed to her that it was not the money I cared for; only to do what was just and right, as any British sailor must when delicately handled. Also her confidence in me was so thoroughly sweet and delicate, that I felt the whole of my heart wrapped up in saving her from her enemies. We made no arrangements about it; but I went into her service bodily, being left to my own discretion, as seemed due to my skill and experience. I was to keep the ferry going, because of the opportunities, as well as to lull suspicion, and always at dark I was bound to be (according to my own proposal) near the river front of the house, to watch against all wicked treachery. And especially if a spy of Chowne's should come sneaking and skulking there, whether in a boat or out of it, I gladly volunteered to thrash him within an inch of his foul base life. The bad

man's name never passed between us ; and indeed I may say that the lady forbore from committing herself against anybody, so that I was surprised to find such wit in one so youthful.

We settled between us that my duties were to begin that very day, and my salary of course to run, also how the lady was to let me know when wanted, and I to tell her when I discovered anything suspicious. And as I had been compelled to restore the Parson's gun to his gunmaker, Miss Carey led me to a place you might almost call an armoury, and bade me choose any piece I liked, and her own maid should place it where I could find it that same evening, as though it were to shoot wild-fowl for them. But she advised me on no account to have any talk with Nanette, or any servants of the household, whether male or female, not only because of the wicked reports and cruel slanders prevailing, but also that it might not be known how I was to act in her interest. And then having ordered me a good hot dinner in the butler's pantry, as often was done for poor people, she let me go once, and then called me back, and said, " Oh, nothing ; " and then called me again, and said, looking steadily out of the window, " By the by, I have quite forgotten to say that there is a boat belonging to a ship commanded by a son of

Sir Philip Bampfylde, a white boat, with three oars on each side, and sometimes an officer behind them. If they should happen to come up the river, or to go ashore upon business here, you need not—I mean, you will quite understand that no harm whatever is intended to me, and therefore that you may—you see what I mean."

"To be sure, to be sure, my lady. Of course I may quit my duty so long as there is a man-of-war's boat in the river; even the boldest and worst of men would venture nothing against you then."

"Quite so," she replied, looking bravely round, with as much of pride in her bright blue eyes as of colour on her soft fresh cheeks. So I made my best bow and departed.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

TWO POOR CHILDREN.

By this time I owe it to all the kind people who have felt some pity for our Bardie and her fortunes, to put off no longer a few little things which I ought to tell them. In the first place, they must not think of me, but look upon me as nobody (treat me, in fact, as I treat myself), and never ask what I knew just now, and what I came to know afterwards. Only to trust me (as now they must) to act in all things honourably, and with no regard to self; and not only that, but with lofty feeling, and a sense of devotion towards the members of the weaker sex.

Captain Drake Bampfylde was the most unlucky of born mortals. To begin with, he was the younger son of that very fine Sir Philip, and feeling that he had far more wit and enterprise than his elder brother, while thankful to nature for these endowments, he needs must feel amiss with her for having misman-

aged his time of birth. Now please to observe my form of words. I never said that he did so feel, I only say that he must have done so, unless she had made him beyond herself; which, from her love for us, she hardly ever tries to do. However, he might have put up with that mistake of the goddess that sits cross-legged,—I have heard of her, I can tell you, and a ship named after her; though to spell her name would be a travail to me, fatal perhaps at my time of life,—I mean to say, at any rate, that young Drake Bampfylde might have managed to get over the things against him, and to be a happy fellow, if he only had common luck. But Providence having gifted him with unusual advantages of body, and mind, and so forth, seemed to think its duty done, and to leave him to the devil afterwards.

This is a bad way of beginning life, especially at too young an age to be up to its philosophy; and the only thing that can save such a man is a tremendous illness, or the down-right love of a first-rate woman. Thence they recover confidence, or are brought into humility, and get a bit of faith again, as well as being looked after purely, and finding a value again to fight for, after abandoning their own. Not that Drake Bampfylde ever did slip into evil courses, so far as I could hear of him, or even give way to the sense of

luck, and abandon that of duty. I am only saying how things turn out, with nineteen men out of twenty. In spite of chances, he may have happened just to be the twentieth. I know for sure that he turned up well, though vexed with tribulation. Evil times began upon him, when he was nothing but a boy. He fell into a pit of trouble through his education; and ever since from time to time new grief had overtaken him. A merrier little chap, or one more glad to make the best of things, could not be found; as was said to me by the cook, and also the parlour-maid. He would do things, when he came out among the servants, beautifully; and the maids used to kiss him so that his breath was taken away with pleasing them. And then he went to school, and all the maids, and boys, and men almost, came out to see the yellow coach, and throw an old shoe after him. This, however, did not help him, as was seriously hoped; and why? Because it went heel-foremost, from the stupidity of the caster. News came, in a little time, that there was mischief upward, and that Master Drake must be fetched home, to give any kind of content again. For he was at an ancient grammar-school in a town seven miles from Exeter, where everything was done truly well to keep the boys from fighting. Only the habit and

tradition was that if they must fight, fight they should until one fell down, and could not come to the scratch again. And Drake had a boy of equal spirit with his own to contend against, not however of bone and muscle to support him thoroughly. But who could grieve, or feel it half so much as young Drake Bampfylde did, when the other boy, in three days' time, died from a buzzing upon his brain? He might have got into mischief now, even though he was of far higher family than the boy who had foundered instead of striking; but chiefly for the goodwill of the school, and by reason of the boy's father having plenty of children still to feed, and consenting to accept aid therein, that little matter came to be settled among them very pleasantly. Only the course of young Drake's life was changed thereby, as follows.

The plan of his family had been to let him get plenty of learning at school, and then go to Oxford Colleges and lay in more, if agreeable; and so grow into holy orders of the Church of England, well worth the while of any man who has a good connection. But now it was seen, without thinking twice, that all the disturbers and blasphemers of the Nonconformist tribe, now arising everywhere (as in dirty Hezekiah, and that greasy Hepzibah, who dared to

dream such wickedness concerning even me), every one of these rogues was sure to cast it up against a parson, in his most heavenly stroke of preaching, that he must hold his hand, for fear of killing the clerk beneath him. And so poor Drake was sent to sea; the place for all the scape-goats.

Here ill fortune dogged him still, as its manner always is, after getting taste of us. He heeded his business so closely that he tumbled into the sea itself; and one of those brindle-bellied sharks took a mouthful out of him. Nevertheless he got over that, and fell into worse trouble. To wit, in a very noble fight between his Britannic Majesty's sloop of war "Hellgoblins," carrying twelve guns and two carronades (which came after my young time), and the French corvette "Heloise," of six-and-twenty heavy guns, he put himself so forward that they trained every gun upon him. Of course those fellows can never shoot anything under the height of the moon, because they never stop to think; nevertheless he contrived to take considerable disadvantage. By a random shot they carried off the whole of one side of his whiskers; and the hearing of the other ear fell off, though not involved in it. The doctors could not make it out: however, I could thoroughly, from long acquaintance with cannon-balls. Also he had

marks of powder under his skin, that would never come out, being of a coarse-grained sort, and something like the bits of tea that float in rich folks' tea-cups. Happening, as he did by nature, to be a fine, florid, and handsome man, this powder vexed him dreadfully. Nevertheless the ladies said, loving powder of their own, that it made him look so much nicer.

That, however, was quite a trifle, when compared to his next misfortune. Being gazetted to a ship, and the whole crew proud to sail under him, he left the Downs with the wind abaft, and all hands in high spirits. There was nothing those lads could not have done; and in less than twelve hours they could do nothing. A terrible gale from south-west arose; in spite of utmost seamanship they were caught in the callipers of the Varne, and not a score left to tell of it.

These were things to try a man, and prove the stuff inside him. However, he came out gallantly. For being set afloat again, after swimming all night and half a day, he brought into the Portland Roads a Crappo ship of twice his tonnage, and three times his gunnage; and now his sailors were delighted, having hope of prize-money. That they never got, of course (which, no doubt, was all the better for their consti-

tutions), but their knowledge of battle led them to embark again with him, having sense (as we always have) of luck, and a crooked love of a man whose bad luck seems to have taken the turn. And yet their judgment was quite amiss, and any turn taken was all for the worse. Captain Bampfylde did a thing, which even I, in my hotter days, would rather have avoided. He ran a thirty-two gun frigate under the chains of a sixty-four. He thought that they must shoot over him, while he laid his muzzles to her water-line, and then carried her by boarding.

Nothing could have been finer than this idea of doing it, and with eight French ships out of nine, almost, he must have succeeded. But once more his luck came over, like a cloud, and darkened him. The Frenchmen had not only courage (which they have too much of), but also what is not their gift, with lucky people against them, self-command and steadiness. They closed their lower ports, and waited for the Englishmen to come up. They knew that the side of their ship fell in, like the thatch of a rick, from the lower ports, ten feet above the enemy. They had their nettings ready, and a lively sea was running.

It grieves as well as misbecomes me to describe the rest of it. The Englishmen swore with all their

hearts at their ladders, the sea, and everything, and their captain was cast down between the two ships, and compelled to dive tremendously; in a word it came to this, that our people either were totally shot and drowned, or spent the next Sunday in prison at Brest.

Now here was a thing for a British captain, such as the possibility of it never could be dreamed of. To have lost one ship upon a French shoal, and the other to a Frenchman! Drake Bampfylde, but for inborn courage, must have hanged himself outright. And, as it was, he could not keep from unaccustomed melancholy. And, when he came home upon exchange, it was no less than his duty to abandon pleasure now, and cheerfulness, and comfort; only to consider how he might redeem his honour.

In the thick of this great trouble came another three times worse. I know not how I could have borne it, if it had been my case, stoutly as I fight against the public's rash opinions. For this Captain was believed, and with a deal of evidence, to have committed slaughter upon his brother's children, and even to have buried them. He found it out of his power to prove that really he had not done it, nor had even entertained a wish that it might happen so. Everybody thought how much their dying must avail

him; and though all had a good idea of his being upright, most of them felt that this was nothing, in such strong temptation. I have spoken of this before, and may be obliged again to speak of it; only I have rebutted always, and ever shall rebut, low ideas. Yet if truly he did kill them, was he to be blamed or praised, for giving them good burial? The testimony upon this point was no more than that of an unclad man, which must of course have been worthless; until they put him into a sack, and in that form received it. This fellow said that he was coming home towards his family, very late one Friday night; and he knew that it was Friday night because of the songs along the road of the folk from Barnstaple market. He kept himself out of their way, because they had such a heap of clothes on; and being established upon the sands, for the purpose of washing his wife and children, who never had seen water before, and had therefore become visited, he made a short cut across the sands to the hole they had all helped to scoop out, in a stiff place where some roots grew. This was his home; and not a bad one for a seaside visit. At any rate he seemed to have been as happy there as any man with a family can experience; especially when all the members need continual friction.

This fine fellow was considering how he could get

on at all with that necessary practice, if the magistrates should order all his frame to be covered up; and fearing much to lose all chance of any natural action—because there was a crusade threatened—he lay down in the moonlight, and had a thoroughly fine roll in the sand. Before he had worn out this delight, and while he stopped to enjoy it more, he heard a sound, not far away, of somebody digging rapidly. Or at any rate, if it was not digging, it was something like it. The weather was wonderfully hot, so that the rushes scarcely felt even cool to his breast and legs. In that utterly lonely place (for now the road was a mile behind him, and the sands without a track, and the stars almost at midnight), there came upon him sudden fright, impossible to reason with. He had nothing to be robbed off, neither had he enemy; as for soul, he never yet had heard of any such ownership. But an unknown latitude of terror overpowered him. Nothing leads a man like fear; and this poor savage, though so naked, was a man of some sort.

Therefore, although he would far liefer have skulked off in the crannying shadows, leaving the moon to see to it, he could by no means find the power to withdraw himself like that. The sound came through the rushes, and between the moonlit

hillocks so, that he was bound to follow it. Crouching through the darker seams, and setting down his toe-balls first, as naked feet alone can do, step by step he drew more near, though longing to be further off. And still he heard the heel-struck spade, and then a cast, and then the sullen sound of sand a-sliding. Then he came to a hollow place, and feared to turn the corner.

Being by this time frightened more than any words can set before us, back he stroked his shaggy hair, and in a hat of rushes laid his poor wild face for gazing. And in the depth of the hollow where the moonlight scarcely marked itself, and there seemed a softer herbage than of dry junk-rushes, but the banks combed over so as to bury the whole three fathoms deep at their very first subsiding—a man was digging a small deep grave.

On the slope of the bank, and so as to do no mischief any longer, two little bodies lay put back; not flung anyhow; but laid, as if respect was shown to them. Each had a clean white night-gown on, and lay in decorous attitude, only side by side, and ready to go into the grave together. The man who was digging looked up at them, and sighed at so much necessity; and then fell to again, and seemed desirous to have done with it.

So was the naked man who watched him, fright by this time overcreeping even his very eyeballs. He blessed himself for his harmlessness, and ill-will to discipline, all the way home to his own sand-hill; and a hundredfold when he came to know (after the dregs of fright had cleared) that he had seen laid by for coolness, by this awful gravedigger, the cocked hat of a British Captain in the Royal Navy. This hat he had seen once before, and wondered much at the use of it, and obtained an explanation which he could not help remembering. And fitting this to his own ideas, he was as sure as sure could be, that Captain Bampfylde was the man who was burying the children.

Now when this story reached the ears of poor old Sir Philip, whether before or after his visit to our country matters not, it may be supposed what his feelings were of sorrow and indignation. He sent for this savage, who seemed beyond the rest of his tribe in intelligence, as indeed was plainly shown by his coming to bathe his family, and in spite of all the difference of rank and manner between them, questions manifold he put, but never shook his story. And then he sent to Exeter for a lawyer, thoroughly famous for turning any man inside out and putting what he pleased inside him. But even he was al-

together puzzled by this man in the sack, wherein he now lived for decorum's sake, however raw it made him. And the honest fellow said that clothing tempted him so to forsake the truth, when he could not tell his own legs in it, that it sapped all principle.

That question is not for me to deal with, nor even a very much wiser man, except that my glimpses of foreign tribes have all been in favour of nudity. And the opposite practice is evidently against all the bent of our civilised women, who are perpetually rebelling, and more and more eager to open their hearts to their natural manifestation. For the heart of a woman is not like a man's, "desperately wicked;" and how can they prove this unless they show its usual style of working? Only the other day I saw ——but back I must go to the heart of my tale. In a word, this fine male savage convinced every one he came into contact with (which after his bathing was permitted, if the other man bathed afterwards), that truly, surely, and with no mistake he must have seen something. What it was became naturally quite another question; and upon this head no two people could be found of one opinion. But though it proved an important point, I will not dwell too long on it.

Captain Drake's boat, to my firm belief, never came once up the river now; and I thought that my beautiful young lady seemed a little grieved at this. Every now and then she crossed, on her way to see old women, and even that old Mother Bang; and the French maid became a plague to me. She had laid herself out to obtain me, because of the softness with which I carried her; and her opposition to my quid naturally set her heart all the more upon me. I will not be false enough to say that I did not think of her sometimes, because she really did go on in a tantalising manner. And we seemed to have between us something, when her lady's back was turned. However, she ought to have known that I never mean anything by this; and if she chose to lie back like that, and put her red lips toppermost, the least thing she should have done was first to be up to our manners and customs.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

A FINE OLD GENTLEMAN.

When I came to look round upon this state of things, and consider it, I made up my mind to tempt Providence, or rather perhaps the most opposite Power, by holding on where I was, in spite of the Parson and all his devices. This was a stupid resolve, and one on which he had fully calculated. I was getting a little perhaps fond of Nanette, though not quite so much as she fancied; feeling unable to pin my faith to a thing she had whispered into my ear; to wit, that she would thrice soon inherit one three grand money, hunder tousand, more than one great strong man could leeft. I asked her to let me come and try; and she said it was possible to be. Having a thorough acquaintance with Crappos, and the small wretched particles of their money, I did not attach much importance to this; for I like our King's face, and they have not got it; and they seem

to stamp their stuff anyhow. But in spite of all prejudice, it would be well to look a little into it; particularly as this girl (whether right or wrong in thousands) had a figure not be denied, when you came home to her.'

Nevertheless I am not the man to part with myself at random; and there was a good farmer's daughter now, solid, and two-and-thirty—which is my favourite ship to sail in, handy, strong, and with guns well up—this young woman crossed the ferry, at eightpence a-day, for my sake; and I thought of retaining a lawyer to find what might be her prospects. She was by no means bad to look at, when you got accustomed; and her nature very kind, and likely to see to Bunny's clothes; also she never contradicted; which is cotton-wool to one who ever has rheumatics. But I did not wish to pay six-and-eightpence, and then be compelled to lose eightpence a-day, in order to steer clear of her. So I ferried both her and Nanette alike, and let them encounter one another, and charged no difference in their weight.

Nothing better fits a man, for dealing with the womankind, than to be well up in fish. Now I found the benefit of that knowledge where I never looked for it; and I knew the stale from the fresh—though these come alike in the pickle of matrimony—also

(which is far more to the point) the soft roes from the hard roes. These you cannot change; but must persuade yourself to like whichever you happen to get of them. And that you find out afterwards.

While I was dwelling upon these trifles, and getting on well with my serious trade, working my ferry, and catching salmon so as to amaze the neighbourhood, also receiving my well-earned salary from the fair Mistress Isabel, and surprising the public-houses every night with my narratives—in a word, becoming the polar-star of both sides of the river—a thing befell me which was quite beyond all sense of reason.

Through wholesome fear of Parson Chowne, and knowledge of his fire-tricks, I kept the Rose of Devon in a berth of deep fresh water; where a bulk of sand backed up, and left a large calm pool of river. Here the dimpling water scarcely had the life to flow along —when the tide was well away; and scarcely brought a single bubble big enough to break upon us. According to the weather, so the colour of the water was. Only when you understood, it seemed to please you always.

One night I was not asleep, but getting very near it; setting in my mind afloat (as I felt the young tide flowing) thoughts or dreams, or lighter visions

than the lightest dream that flits, of, about, concerning, touching, anyhow regarding, or, in any lightest side-light, gleaming, who can tell, or glancing from the chequers of the day-work. Suddenly a great explosion blew me out of my berth, and filled the whole of the cuddy with blaze and smoke. I lay on the floor half-stunned, and with only sense enough for wondering. Then Providence enabled me, on the strength of the battles I had been through, to get on my elbow, and look around. Everything seemed quite odd and stupid for a little while to me. I neither knew where I was, nor what had happened or would happen me.

It may have been half an hour, or it may have been only half a minute, before I was all alive again, and able to see to the mischief. Then I found that a very rude thing had been done, and a most unclerical action, not to be lightly excused, and wholly undeserved on my part. A good-sized kettle of gunpowder had been cast into my cuddy, possibly as a warning to me; but, to say the least, a dangerous one. My wrath overcame all fear so much, that in spite of the risk of meeting others, I rushed through the smoke and up the ladder, and seized my gun from its sling on the deck, and gazed (or rather I should say stared) in every direction around me.

But whether from the darkness of the night, or the stinging and stunning turmoil in my eyes and upon my brain, I could not descry any moving shape, or any living creature. And this even added to my alarm, so that I got very little more sleep that night, I do assure you.

However, I kept my own counsel about it, even from my lady patroness, resolving to maintain a sharp look-out, and act as behoved a gallant Cymro, thrown among a host of savages. To this intent, I took our tiller, which was just about six feet long, and entirely useless now, and I put a bit of a bottom to it, so as to stand quite decently, and fixed a cross-tressel for shoulders, and then dressed it up so with my old fishing-suit and a castaway hat to encourage my brains, that really, though the thing was so grave, I could not help laughing at myself; in the dusk it was so like me. When the labours of the day were over, and the gleam of the water deadened, I set up this other fine Davy Llewellyn on board the ketch, now here now there, sometimes leaning over the bulwarks in contemplation of the river (which was my favourite attitude, from my natural turn for reflection), sometimes idly at work with a rope, or anything or nothing, only so as to be seen from shore, and expose to the public his whereabouts. Meanwhile I

crouched in a ditch hard by, and with both barrels loaded.

You will say this was an unchristian thing, especially as I suspected strongly that my besiegers wore naked backs, and would therefore receive my discharge in full. I will not argue that point, but tell you (in common fairness to myself, and to prevent any slur of the warm affection, long subsisting between all who have cared to listen to me and my free self) that whenever I hoped for a chance at those fellows, I drew the duck-shot from the first barrel, and put a light charge of snipe-shot in, which no man could object to. The second barrel was ready, in case that the worst should come to the worst, as we say.

Now it is a proof of my bad luck, and perhaps of my having done a thing below the high Welsh nature, that Providence never vouchsafed me a single shot at any one of them. The more trouble I took, the less they came ; until I could scarcely crook my fingers through the rheumatics they brought on me. Night after night, I said to myself, "If it only pleases the Lord to save me from the wiles of this anointed one, I vow to go back to my duty, and teach those other young chits of boys their work." For I had observed (though I would not tell it, except in a rheumatic

twinge) that even Captain Bampfylde's men had lost the style of drawing oars through the water properly, and as I used to give the tune, five-and-twenty years agone.

It is needless to say, that after all the close actions I have conquered in, a canister of gunpowder was nothing to disturb me. But as they might do worse next time, whether in joke or earnest, I made me a hutch of stout strong oak, also cut the bulk-head out, and freed myself into the hold at once, upon any unjust disturbance. Nigh me was my double gun, heavily shotted at bed-time, and the spar which had knocked down Parson Chowne, and might have to do it again perhaps. And now I began to persuade myself into happy sleep again; for my nature is not vindictive.

One night I lay broad awake, perhaps from having shot a curlew, and eaten him, without an onion sewn inside while roasting, but he had been so hard to shoot that I was full of zeal to dine upon him, and had no onion handy. Whether it were so or not, I lay awake and thought about the strange things now come over me. To be earning money at a very noble rate indeed; to be winning the attentions of it may be ten young women (each of whom believed that never had I been in love before); and to be estab-

lishing a business which could scarcely fail of growing to a public-house with benches and glass windows looking down upon the river; and yet with all this prospect brewing, scarcely to have a moment's peace! What a lucky thing for Parson Chowne that I have no cold black blood in me! In this medley of vague thoughts (such as all men of large brain have, and even myself when the moon ordains it) a strong and good idea struck me, and one to be dwelled upon to-morrow; and if then approved, to be carried out immediately. This was no less than to beg an audience of Sir Philip Bampfylde himself, and tell him all that I ever had seen of Chowne and his devices, and place Sir Philip on his guard, and learn maybe a little of the many things that puzzled me. Of course I had thought of this before; but for several reasons had forborne to carry it any further. In the first place, it seemed such a coarse rude way of meeting plans that should be met with equal stealth and subtlety, unless a man were prepared to own himself vanquished in intelligence. Again, it would have been very difficult to obtain a private interview without some stir concerning it. Moreover, I felt a delicacy with respect to my stewardship on behalf of those two children; for a stranger might not at a glance perceive that prudence and self-denial

on my part, which the worrisome frivolousness of the fish had, for the time, frustrated. However, I now perceived that a gentleman of Sir Philip's lofty bearing could not with any grace or dignity allude to his own beneficence; and as for the second difficulty, I might hope for Miss Carey's good offices, while I could no longer think to encounter Chowne with his own weapons, since he had blown me out of bed.

Accordingly I persuaded my beautiful young lady, who had plenty of sense but not much craft, and was pleased with my straightforwardness, to lead me into Sir Philip's presence in a lonely part of the grounds near the river, to the westward, and out of sight of the house; in a word, not far from the Braunton Burrows.

Here the river made a bend and came to the breast of an ancient orchard, rich with grass and thick with trees leafless now, but thickly bearded upon every twig with moss. This was of every form and fashion, and of almost every hue. I had never seen such a freaksome piece of work outside the tropics, although in Devonshire common enough, where the soil is moist and the climate damp. Some of these trees lay down on the ground, as if they were tired of standing, and some were in sitting postures, and some half leaning over; but all alive, in spite of that, and fruitful when it suited them. And everything being

neglected now, from want of the Squire's attention, heaps of rosy and golden apples lay where they had been piled to sweat, but never led to the cider-press.

Perceiving no sign of Sir Philip about, and remembering how it was now beginning to draw on for Christmas-time, I felt myself welcome to one or two of these neglected apples; for it was much if nobody of the farmers' wives who crossed the ferry could afford me a goose for Christmas in my solitary hole. And even if all should fail disgracefully of their duty towards me, I had my eye on a nice young bird of more than the average plumpness, who neglected his parents' advice every day, and came for some favourite grass of his, which only grew just on the river's verge, within thirty yards of my fusil. It would have shown low curiosity to ask if he owned an owner. From his independent manner I felt that he must be public property; and I meant to reduce him into possession right early in the morning of the Saint that was so incredulous. It is every man's duty to treat himself well at the time of the Holy Nativity; and having a knowledge of Devonshire geese, after two months on the stubbles, I could not do better than store in my boat one or two of these derelict apples.

Never do I see or taste an apple without thinking

of poor Bardie. "Appledies," she always called them, and she was so fond of them, and her little white teeth made marks like a small-tooth comb in the flesh of them. I was thinking of her, and had scarcely embarked more than a bushel or so, for sauce, in a little snug locker of my own, when I had the pleasure of seeing the gentleman whom I had come all that way to see.

At my own desire, and through Miss Carey's faith in me, it had not been laid before Sir Philip that I was likely to meet him here; only she had told me when and where to come across him, so as not to be broken in upon. Now he came down the narrow winding walk, at the lower side of the orchard, a path overhanging a little brook which murmured under last summer's growth; and I gazed at him silently for a while, through the bushes that overhung my boat. He was dressed as when I had seen him last through my telescope, at the time we came up the river; that is to say, in black velvet, and with his long sword hanging beside him. A brave, and stately, and noble man, walking through a steady gloom of grief, and yet content to walk alone, and never speak of it.

I leaped through the bush at the river's brink, and suddenly stood before him. He set his calm

cold gaze upon me, without a shadow of surprise, as if to say, "You have no business in my private grounds; however, it is not worth speaking of." I made him a low bow with my hat off; and he moved his own, and was passing on.

"Will your Worship look at me," I said, "and see whether you remember me?" He seemed just a little surprised, and then with his inborn courtesy complied.

"I have seen you before, but I know not where. Sir, I often need pardon now for the weakness of my memory."

In a few short words I brought to his mind that evening visit to my cottage, with Anthony Stew and the yellow carriage.

"To be sure, to be sure! I remember now," he said, with his grave and placid smile: "David Llewellyn! Both good old names, and the latter, I daresay, in your belief, both the older and the better one. I remember your hospitality, your patience, and your love of children. Is there anything I can do for you?"

"No, your Worship, nothing. I am here for your sake only; although if I wanted, I would ask you, having found you so good and kind."

"Whence did you get that expression, my friend?

The common usage is 'kind and good;' I once knew a very little child—but I suppose it is the Welsh idiom."

"Your Worship, I can speak English thoroughly; better even than my own language; and all around us the scholarly people have more English than of Welsh. But to let your Worship know my cause to come so much upon you, is of things more to the purpose. I have found a bad man meaning mischief to your Worship."

"It cannot be so," he replied, withdrawing, as if I were taking a liberty; "no doubt but you mean me well, Llewellyn, and yourself believe it. But neither I, nor any one else of all my family, now so small, can have given reason for any ill-will towards us."

It was not for me to dare to speak, while the General was reflecting thus, as if in his own mind going through every small accident of his life; even the servants he might have discharged; or the land-forces ordered for punishment, whereof to my mind they lack more than they get, and grow their backs up in a manner beyond all perception of discipline.

For my part, I could not help thinking, as I watched him carefully, how low and black must be the nature of the heart that could rejoice in such a man's unhappiness. A man, who at threescore years

and five, was compelled to rack his memory (even after being long in uncontrolled authority) to find a time when he might have given cause for private enmity! If I had only enjoyed such chances, I must have had at least a score of strong enemies by this time. Being a little surprised, I looked again and again at his white eyebrows, while his eyes were on the ground; also at his lips and nostrils, which were highly dignified. And I saw, in my dry low way, one reason why he had never given offence. He was perhaps a little scant of humour and of quickness; which two things give more offence to the outer world that has them not, than the longest course of rigid business carried on without them. I have seen a man who could not crack nuts fly into a fury with one who could. And these reflections made me even yet more anxious to serve him, so grave, and calm, and simple-minded, and so patient was his face.

Nevertheless I did not desire, and would at the point of his sword have refused, a halfpenny, for the things of import which I now disclosed to him. He led me to an ancient bench, beneath a well-worn apple-tree; and sat thereon, and even signed for me to sit beside him. My knowledge of his rank would not permit me to do this; until I was compelled to argue. A gentleman more shaped and set inside his

own opinions, it had never been my luck to have to deal with, now and then. There are men you cannot laugh at, though you get the best of them, unless your conscience works with such integrity as theirs does. And the sense of this, in some way unknown, may have now been over me. How I began it, or even showed my sense of manners, and of all the different rank between us, is beyond my knowledge now; and must have flowed from instinct then. Enough that I did lead Sir Philip to have thoughts, and to hearken me.

With a power not expected by myself at first beginning, while in doubt of throat and words, I contrived to set before him much that had befallen me. Though I never said a word that lay outside my knowledge, neither let a spark of heat find entrance to my mind at all, and would rather speak too little than be thought outrageous, there could be no doubt that my simple way of putting all I had to say, moved this lofty man, as if he were one of the children at the well belonging to John the Baptist. I thought of all those pretty dears (as I beheld him listening), and the way they sat around me, and their style of moving toes at any great catastrophe; whiles they kept their hands and noses under very stiff control; also the universal sigh, when my story killed

any one by any means unfit to die; and their pure contempt of the things they suck, the whole while they are swallowing. Sir Philip (to whom my thoughts meant no failure of respect, but feeling of simplicity), this old gentleman let me speak as one well accustomed to lengthiness. But I did my best to keep a small helm, and yards on the creak for bracing.

"If I take you aright," he said, as I drew near the end of my story, "you have not a high opinion of that reverend gentleman, Stoyle Chowne."

"I look upon him, your Worship, as the blackest-hearted son of Belial ever sent into this world."

Sir Philip frowned, as behoved a man accustomed to authority, and only to have little words, half spoken out, before him. But at my time of life, no officer under an admiral on full pay, could have any right to damp my power of expression. However, my respect was such for the presence of this noble man, that I rose and made a leg to him.

"I am sorry to say," he answered, bowing to my bow, as all gentlemen must do; "that this is not the first time I have heard unpleasant things about poor Stoyle. He is my godson, and has been almost as one of my own children. I never can believe that he would ever do me injury. If I thought it, I should have to think amiss of almost every one."

He turned away, as if already he had said more than he meaned; and feeling how he treated me, as if of his own rank almost, I did not wonder at the tales of men who gave their lives to save him, in the bloody battle-time. Knowing the world as I do, I only sighed, and waited for him.

"You are very good," he said, without a tone of patronage, "to have thought to help me by delivering your opinions. A heavy trouble has fallen upon us, and the goodwill of the neighbourhood has many times astonished me. However, you must indulge no more in any such wild ideas. They all proceed from the evil one, and are his choicest device to lower the value of holy orders. The Reverend Stoyle Chowne descends from a very good old family, at any rate on his father's side; and he has his dignity to maintain, and his holy office to support him. On this head, I will hear no more."

The General shut his mouth and closed it, so that I could never dare to open mine again to him, concerning this one subject. And his manner stopped me so that I only made my duty. This he acknowledged in a manner which became both him and me; and then he passed through a little gate to his usual walk upon Braunton Burrows.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

NOTICE TO QUIT.

We were now come to the time of year which all good Christians celebrate by goodwill and festivities. Even I, in my humble way, had made some preparation for this holy period, by shooting Farmer Badcock's goose; which had long been in my mind. Upon plucking, he turned out even whiter and better than expectation, and the tender down clung to him, in a way that showed his texture. I hung him up in a fine through-draught, and rejoiced in the thought of him every time my head came in between his legs. Neither did he fall away when he came to roasting.

But when I had put him down, upon the Christmas morning, with intent to stick thereby, and baste him up to one o'clock, dipping bits of bread beneath him, as he might begin to drip, and winning thus foretaste of him—all my plans were overset by a merry party coming, and demanding "ferry." With my lovely

goose beginning just to spread his skin a little, and hiss sweetly at the fire, up I ran, with resolution not to ferry anybody, but to cook my goose aright.

Nevertheless it might not be so. Here were three young fellows ramping of the high nobility, swearing to come aboard and stick me, if I would not ferry them. It was not that I feared of this, but that I beheld a guinea spinning in the morning sun, which compelled me to forego, and leave my poor young goose to roll around, and try to roast himself. Therefore I backed him from the fire, and laid half a pound of slow lard on his breast, and trusted his honour to keep alive.

These young joyous fellows now were awake to everything. They had begun the morning bravely with a cup of rum and lemon, then a tender grill of beef, and a quart of creamy ale, every one accordingly. And they meant to keep the day up to no less a pattern, being all of fine old birth, and bound to act accordingly. However, it had been said by some one, that they ought to go to church; and they happened to feel the strength of this, and vowed that the devil should catch the hindmost, unless they struck out for it.

Hence I came to win the pleasure of their company, that day. Their nearest church was the little,

simple, quiet old church at Ashford. From my ferry I could see it; and it often made me sigh, because it looked so tranquil. Sweet green land sloped up towards it, with a trace of crooked footpaths, and the nicks of elbowed hedges, where the cows came down and stood. Also from it, looking downward through the valley of the Tawe, may be seen a spread of beauty, and of soft variety, and of largeness opening larger with the many winding waters, to the ocean unbeheld, that the sternest man must sigh, and look again, and look again.

A genuine parson now was master of this queer old quiet church; a man who gave his life entire for the good of other men. In a little hut he lived, which the clerk's house overrode, just at the turning of the lane, upon the steep ascent, and where the thunder-showers flooded it. All the poor folk soon began to dwell upon his noble nature, and to feel that here was some one fit to talk of Saviours. Miles around they came to hear him, so that he was forced to stand on a stool in the porch, and speak to them. For speaking it was, and not preaching; which made all the difference.

These three gay young sparks leaped lightly into the bow of my ferry-boat, and bade me pull for my very life, unless I desired to be flung into the water

then and there. A strong spring-tide was running up, and I was forced to pull the starboard oar with all my might to keep the course. My passengers were carrying on with every sort of quip and crank, and jokes, that made the boat to tilt, when suddenly a rush of water flooded their silk stockings. I thought at first that the bung was out, and told them not to be frightened; but in another breath I saw that it was a great deal worse than that. The water was rushing in through a mighty hole in the planks of the larboard bow; and in three minutes we must be swamped. "All aft, all aft in a moment!" I cried; "it is our only chance of reaching shore." The gallants were sobered at once by fright, and I bundled them into the stern-sheets, sat on the aft-most thwart myself, and for the lives of us all pulled back towards the bank we had lately quitted. By casting all the weight thus astern, I raised the leak up to the water-line, except when we plunged to the lift of the oars, and the water poured in less rapidly now, with the set of the tide on our starboard beam. However, with all this, and all my speed, and my passengers showing great presence of mind, we barely managed to touch the bank and jump out, when down she foundered.

At first I was at a loss altogether even to guess

how this thing had happened; for the boat seemed perfectly sound and dry at the time of our leaving the shore. But as soon as the tide was out, and I could get at her, I perceived that a trick of entirely fiendish cunning and atrocity had been played upon me. A piece of planking a foot in length and from eight to ten inches wide had been cut out with a key-hole saw, at the time she was lying high and dry, and doubtless before daybreak. This had been then replaced most carefully with a little caulking, so that it was water-tight without strong pressure from outside; but the villain had contrived it, knowing in what state of tide I was likely next to work the ferry, so that the rush of water could not fail to beat the piece in.

It made my blood run cold to think of the stealthiness of this attempt, as well as the skill it was compassed with, for the chances were ten to one almost in favour of its drowning me, and leaving a bad name behind me too, for having drowned my passengers. And to this it must have come if so much as a single woman had been in the boat that day. For these, when in danger, always do the very worst thing possible; and the manager of this clever scheme knew of course that my freight was likely, on the Christmas morning, to be chiefly female. Luckily I

had refused two boat-loads of young and attractive womankind, not from religious feeling only, but because I had to chop a trencherful of stuffing.

This affair impressed me so with a sense of awe and reverence, and a certainty that Parson Chowne must be in direct receipt of counsel from the evil one, that my mind was good to be off at once, and thank the Lord for escaping him. For let us see what must have happened but for the goodness and fatherly care of a merciful Providence over me. The boat would have sunk in the very midst of the rapid and icy river. David Llewellyn, with his accustomed fortitude, would have endeavoured to swim ashore, and yet could not have resisted the claims of three or even four young women, who doubtless would have laid hold of him, all screaming, splashing, and dragging him down. The mind refuses to contemplate such a picture any longer!

This matter could not be kept quiet, as the first attempt had been, but spread from house to house, and gained in size from each successive tongue, until the man at the foot of the bridge, who naturally detested me, whispered into every ear, that it was high time to have a care of that interloping Welshman, who had drowned six fine young noblemen, for the sake of their buckles and watches. And my courage

was at so low an ebb, that when he retreated into his house, I could not even bring my mind to the power of kicking his door in. Hence that calumny, not being quenched, went the round of the neighbourhood; and I might as well haul down my sign, and the hopes of any public-house became a fading vision. And of all the fine young women who had set their hearts upon keeping it (as I described my intention to them), and who had picked up bits of Welsh, for an access to my heart in all its patriotism, there was not one worth looking at, or fit to be a landlady, who took the trouble to come near me, in the frosty weather.

When a man is forsaken by the world, he must have recourse to reason. And if only borne up thereby, and with a little cash in hand, he can wait till the world comes round again. This was my position now. I never had behaved so well in all my life before, I think; though always conscientious. But of late I had felt, as it were, in one perpetual round of bitter wrestling with the evil one. Men of a loose kind may not see that this was tenfold hard upon me, from my props being knocked away. I mean my entire trust and leaning upon the ancient Church of England, which (perhaps by repulsion from those fellows that came after our old ham, as

well as our proper parson's knowledge of soles and the way to fry them) had increased upon me so, that my heart leaped up whenever I heard the swing of a bell on Sunday. Some of this perhaps was owing to my thoughts of Newton clock, and twelve shillings now due to me from my captainship thereof: but how could this loyal and ecclesiastical fervour thrive, while a man in holy orders did such unholy things to me?

The only one with faith enough, and sense enough, to stand by me now, through this bitter trial, was that beautiful young lady, whom I did admire so. And if till now I admired only, now I did adore her. Nanette did for herself with me, and all her hopes of ever being Mrs David Llewellyn, by poking up her little toes,—and I saw that they were all square almost,—and with guttural noises crying that on board my boat she would not dare. Miss Carey laughed at her, and stepped with her beautiful boots on board of me; and from that moment she might do exactly as she pleased with me.

However, my ferry was knocked on the head; and all the hopes of a wife and family, and even a public-house and skittles, which I had long been building up, as well as to train our Bunny for barmaid; which must always be done quite young, to get the proper

style of it, and thorough acquaintance with measures, how to make them look quite brim up when they are only three-parts full. All golden dreams will vanish thus; no life of smiling Boniface, but of gun-muzzles was before me; no casting-up of shot by pence, but ramming down on pounds of powder. Let that pass; my only wish is to conceal, in the strictest manner, little trifles about myself.

Isabel Carey was so shocked at hearing of our danger (as by me distinctly told without a word of flourish), that she made me promise strongly to give up my ferrying. This I was becoming ready, more and more every day, to do; especially as nobody ever now came down for porterage. But I told the lady how hard it was to have formed such a valuable trade, or you might say an institution; and then to lose it all, because of certain private enmities. What she said or did hereon is strictly a family question, and can in no way concern the public, since I hauled my flag down.

And now I gained more insight into my great enemy's schemes and doings, than I could have acquired while engaged so much at ferry. For time allowed me to maintain that strict watch upon Narnton Court, which was now become my duty, as well as an especial pleasure, for the following reason. I

began to see most clearly that the foul outrage upon my boat must have been perpetrated by one or both of those savage fellows who were employed as spies upon this great house, from the landward side. They must have forded the river, which is not more than three feet deep in places, when the tide is out, and no floods coming down. These two cunning barbarians came of course from the Nympton rookery, but were lodging for the present in a hole they had scooped for themselves in the loneliest part of Braunton Burrows. Of course they durst not go about in a peopled and civilised neighbourhood, with such an absence of apparel as they could indulge at home. Still they were unsightly objects; and decent people gave them a wide berth, when possible. But my firm intention was to grapple with these savage scoundrels, and to prove at their expense what a civilised Welshman is, and how capable of asserting his commercial privileges. Only as they carried knives, I durst not meet them both at once; and even should I catch them singly, some care was advisable, so as to take them off their guard; because I would not lower myself to the use of anything more barbarous than an honest cudgel.

However, although I watched and waited, and caught sight of them more than once, especially at

night-time when they roved most freely, it was long before I found it prudent to bear down on the enemy. Not from any fear of them, but for fear of slaying them, as I might be forced to do, if they rushed with steel at me.

One night, after the turn of the days, and with mild weather now prevailing, and a sense of spring already fluttering in the valleys, I sat in a dark embrasure at the end of Narnton Court. There had been more light than usual in the windows of the great dining-room, which now was very seldom used for hospitable purposes. And now two gentlemen came forth, as if for a little air, to take a turn on the river-terrace. It did not cost me long to learn that one was good Sir Philip Bampfylde, and the other that very wicked Chowne. The latter had manifestly been telling some of his choicest stories, and held the upper hand as usual.

"General, take my arm. The flags are rough, and the night is of the darkest. You must gravel this terrace, for the sake of your guests, after your port-wine."

"Dick," said the General, with a sigh, for he was a most hospitable man, and accustomed to the army; "Dick, thou hast hardly touched my port; and I like not to have it slighted, sir."

What excuse the Parson made I did not hear, but knew already that one of his countless villanies was his rude contempt of the gift of God, as vouchsafed to Noah, and confirmed by the very first rainbow, which continues the colours thereof up to this time of writing.

Sir Philip leaned on the parapet some twenty yards to windward of me, and he sniffed the fine fresh smell of sea-weed and sea-water coming up the river with a movement of four knots an hour. And in his heart he thanked the Lord, very likely without knowing it. Then he seemed to sigh a little, and to turn to Chowne, and say—

"Dick, this is not as it should be. Look at all this place, and up and down all this length of river; every light you can see burning, is in a house that 'longs to me. And who is now to have it all? It used to make me proud; but now it makes me very humble. You are a parson; tell me, Dick, what have I done to deserve it all?"

The Rev. Richard Stoyle Chowne had not—whatever his other vices were—one grain of pious hypocrisy in all his foul composition. If he had, he might have flourished, and with his native power, must have been one of the foremost men of this, or any other age. But his pride allowed him never to let in pre-

tence religious into the texture of his ways. A worse man need not be desired: and yet he did abhor all cant, to such a degree that he made a mock of his own church-services.

"General, I have nought to say. You have asked this question more than once. You know what my opinion is."

"I know that you have the confidence, sir, every honourable man must have, in my poor son's innocence. You support it against every one."

"Against all the world: against even you, when you allow yourself to doubt it. Tush! I would not twice think of it. However many candles burn" —this was a touch of his nasty sarcasm, which he never could deny himself—"up and down the valley, General, no son of yours, however wild, and troubled in expenditure, could ever shape or even dream of anything dishonourable."

"I hope not—I hope to God, not," Sir Philip said, with a little gasp, as if he were fearing otherwise: "Dick, you are my godson, and you have been the greatest comfort to me; because you never would believe——"

"Not another word, General. You must not dwell on this matter so. The children were fine little dears of course, very clever and very precious——"

"Oh, if you only knew the words, Dick, my little granddaughter could come out with! Scarcely anything you could think of would have been too big for her little mouth. And if she could not do it once, she never left it till she did. Where it came from I could not tell, for we are not great at languages: but it must have been of her mother's race. And the boy, though not with gifts of that sort—oh, you ought to have seen his legs, Dick—at least till he took the whooping-cough!" The stately old gentleman leaned, and dropped a tear perhaps into the river Tawe.

"General, I understand it all," said Chowne, though he never had a child, by reason of the Almighty's mercy to the next generation: "of course these pretty children were a great delight to every one. But affairs of this sort happen in all ancient families. The mere extent of land appears to open for clandestine graves——"

"That wicked devilish story, Dick! Did you tell me, or did you not, to take it as the Fiend's own lie?"

"A lie, of course, as concerns the Captain: from their want of knowledge. But concerning some one else, true enough, I fear, I fear."

Both men had by this time very nearly said their

say throughout. The General seemed to be overcome, and the Parson to be growing weary of a subject often treated in discourse between them. "Before you go in the morning, Dick," said the old man, now recovering, "I wish to consult you about a matter nearly concerning young Isabel. She is a distant cousin of yours. You thoroughly understand the law, of which I have very little knowledge. Perhaps you will meet me in the book-room, for half an hour's quiet talk, before we go to breakfast."

"I cannot do it, Sir Philip. I have my own affairs to see to: I must be off when the moon is up. I cannot sleep in your house, this night."

CHAPTER XL.

FORCIBLE EJECTMENT.

Those things which have been settled for us by long generations of ancestors, all of whom must have considered the subjects, one after the other painfully, and brought good minds of ancient strength (less led away than ours are) to bear upon what lay before them, also living in a time when money went much further, and got a deal more change in honesty, which was then more plentiful—to rush, I say, against the bulwarks of our noble elders (who showed the warmth of their faith by roasting all who disagreed with them), would be, ay and ever will be, a proof of a rebellious, scurvy, and perpetually scabby nature. The above fine reflection came home to me, just as my pipe grew sweet and rich, after an excellent dinner, provided by that most thoughtful and bright young lady, the Honourable Isabel Carey, upon a noble New Year's Day, in the year of our Lord one

thousand seven hundred and eighty-three. Her ladyship now had begun to feel that interest in my intelligence and unusual power of narrative, as well as that confidence in my honour and extreme veracity, which, without the smallest effort or pretence on my part, seem to spring by some law of nature in every candid mind I meet.

Combining this lady's testimonials, as presented weekly, with some honourable trifles picked up here and there along shore, in spite of all discouragement, perhaps I congratulated myself on having turned the corner of another year not badly. I counted my money, to the tune of five-and-twenty level pounds; an amount of cash beyond all experience! Yet, instead of being dazzled, I began to see no reason for not having fifty. Not that I ever thought of money; but for the sake of the children. The tears came into my eyes, to think of these poor little creatures; Bardie with all her fount of life sanded up (as one might say) in that old Sker warren; and Bunny with her strength of feeding weakened over rice and fowl-food; such as old Charles Morgan kept, who had been known to threaten to feed his family upon sawdust. A most respectable man, as well as churchwarden and undertaker; but being bred a pure carpenter, he thought (when his money came in fast, and great

success surprised him) that Providence would be offended at his waste of sawdust.

Now this was the man who had Bunny to keep, entirely from his own wish of course, or the sense of the village concerning her; and many times I had been ready to laugh; and as many times to cry almost, whenever I thought of the many things that were likely to happen between them. To laugh, when I thought of Churchwarden's face regarding our Bunny at breakfast-time, and the way she would say, "I want some more," through his narrow-shouldered children. To cry, when I thought of my dear son's child (and as dear to me as my own almost) getting less of victuals daily, as her welcome should grow staler, and giving way to her old trick of standing on the floor with eyes shut, and with shut mouth to declare, "I won't eat, now you have starved me so;" and no one in that house with wit to understand and humour her. And then I could see her go to bed, in a violent temper anyhow: and when the wind boxed round to north, I could hear her calling, "Granny."

This very tender state of mind, and sense of domestic memories, seems to have drawn me (so far as I can, in a difficult case, remember it) towards a very ancient inn having two bow-windows. When

I entered, no man could be in a stricter state of sobriety: and as if it were yesterday, I remember asking the price of everything. The people were even inclined to refuse to draw anything in the small-liquor line for a man with so little respect for trade as to walk so straight upon New Year's Day. After a little while, I made them see that this was not so much my fault as my misfortune; and when I declared my name, of course, and my character came forward, even rum-shrub out of a cask with golden hoops around it scarcely seemed to be considered good enough for me, gratis. But throughout the whole of this, I felt an anxious and burning sense of eager responsibility, coupled with a strong desire to be everywhere at once.

Right early, to the very utmost of my recollection, I tumbled into my lonely berth, after seeing my fusil primed, and praying to the Lord for guidance through another and a better year. I had clean sheets, which are my most luxurious gift of feeling; and having no room to stretch my legs, or roll, I managed space to yawn, and then went off deliciously. Now I was beginning to dream about the hole I had placed my money in—a clever contrivance of my own, and not in the cuddy at all, because the enemy might attack me there—when

a terrible fit of coughing came and saved my life by waking me. The little cuddy was full of smoke —parching, blinding, choking smoke—so thick that I could scarcely see the red glare of fire behind it, through the brattice of the bulkhead.

"Good Lord," I cried, "have mercy on me! Sure enough, I am done for now. And nobody ever will know or care what the end was of old Dyo!"

I did not stop still to say all this, that you may be quite sure of; and it argues no small power of speech that I was able to say anything. For with a last desire for life, and despairing resolve to try again, I broke my knuckles against the hatch which I had made so heavy for the purpose of protecting me. To go out through my door would have been to rush into the fire itself; and what with the choking, and the thickness, and the terror of the flames violently reddening and roaring a few feet away, I felt my wits beginning to fail me, which of course was certain death. So I sate down on a three-legged stool, which was all my furniture; and for a moment the rushing smoke drew, by some draught, otherwhere; and whether I would or no, a deal of my past life came up to me. I wondered whether I might have been too hard sometimes on any one, or whether I might have forgotten to think

of the Lord, upon any Sunday. And then my thoughts were elevated to the two dear children.

Now what do you think happened to me, when I thought of those two darlings, and the tears from smoke made way for the deep-born tears of a noble heart? Why simply that a flash of flame glanced upon the iron crowbar, wherewith I had opened hatch. I could not have been in pure bright possession of my Maker's gifts to me when I chanced, before going to bed, to lay that crowbar for my pillow-case. Nevertheless I had done it well: and in the stern perception of this desperate extremity, I could not help smiling at the way I had tucked up my head on the crowbar. But (though no time is lost in smiling) I had not a moment to lose even now, although with my utmost wits all awake and coughing. I prised the hatch up in half a moment, where it was stuck in the combings; and if ever a man enjoyed a draught, I did so of air that moment. Many men might have been frightened still, and not have known what to do with themselves. But I assure you, in all honour, that the whole of my mind came back quite calmly, when I was out of smothering. People may say what they like; but I know, after seeing every form of death (and you need not laugh at me very much, if

I even said feeling it)—I know no anguish to be compared to the sense of being pressed under slowly; and the soul with no room to get away.

But I was under the good stars now, and able to think and to look about; and though the ketch could not last long, being of 92 tons only, I found time enough to kneel and thank my God for His mercy to me. There was no ice in the river now, and to swim ashore would have been but little, except for rheumatics afterwards. But it seemed just as well to escape even these; and having been burned out at sea before, I was better enabled to manage it. The whole of the waist of the ketch was in flames, curling and beginning now to indulge their desire of roaring; but the kindness of the Lord prevented wind from blowing. Had there been only a four-knot breeze, you would never have heard of me again; surely which would grieve you.

In this very sad state of mind, combined with a longing for thankfulness, and while I was thinking about the fire—to say the truth, very stupidly, and wondering instead of working—quite an old-fashioned affair restored me to my wits and my love of the world again. This was the strong sour sound of the air when a bullet comes through it

hastily, and casting reproach upon what we breathe, for its want of a stronger activity. A man had made a shot at me, and must have been a lubber by his want of range and common-sense. Before I could think, I was all alive, and fit to enjoy myself almost, as if it were a fight with Frenchmen. The first thing I thought of was the gun lent to me by Miss Carey. To rescue this, I went down even into the cuddy which had so lately proved my very grave almost: and after this I saw no reason why I should not save my money, if the Lord so willed it. From a sense of all the mischief even now around me, I had made a clever hole in the bow-knees of the ketch (where the wood lay thickest), and so had plugged my money up, with the power to count it daily. And now in spite of flame, and roar, and heat of all the 'midships, and the spluttering of the rock-powder bags too wet to be unanimous, I made my mind up just to try to save my bit of money.

Because, although a man may be as coarse, and wicked, and vile-hearted, as even my very worst enemies are, he cannot fail of getting on, and being praised, and made the best of, if he only does his best to stick tight to his money. Therefore, having no boat within reach, and the 'midship all aflame, I made a raft of the cuddy-hatch, and warped along

by the side of the ketch, and purchased my cash from its little nest; and then with a thankful heart, and nothing but a pair of breeches on, made the best of my way ashore, punting myself with a broken oar.

This desire to sacrifice me (without the trouble even taken to count what my value was) gave me such a sense of shock, and of spreading abroad everywhere, without any knowledge left of what might have become of me, and the subject liable to be dropped, if ever entered into by a Jolly Crowner, and a jury glad to please him, that for the moment I sate down upon a shelf of clay, until the wet came through my want of clothes. Suddenly this roused me up to make another trial for the sake of my well-accustomed and familiar suit of clothes, so well beloved; also even my Sunday style, more striking but less comfortable; in lack of which the world could never have gone on in our neighbourhood. Therefore I ran to my little punt, and pushed off and was just in time to save my kit, with a little singeing.

The ketch burned down to the water's edge, and then a rough tide came up and sank her, leaving me in a bitter plight, and for some time quite uncertain how to face the future. From knowledge of the

Parson's style of treating similar cases, I felt it to be a most likely thing that I should be charged with firing her, robbing her, and concealing booty. And this injustice added to the bitterness of my close escape. "It is no use," I said aloud; "it is useless to contend with him. He has sold himself to Satan, and, thank God, I have no chance with him." Therefore by the time the fire had created some disturbance in the cottage bedrooms, I had got my clothing on, in a decent though hasty manner, and slipped into a little wood with my spy-glass, happily saved, and resolved to watch what happened in among the bumpkins.

These came down, and stared and gawked, and picked up bits of singed spars, and so on, and laid down the law to one another, and fought for the relics, and thought it hard that no man's body was to be found with clothes on. I saw them hunting for me, up and down the river channel, with a desperate ignorance of tide (although living so close to it), and I did not like to have my body hunted for like that. But I repressed all finer feelings, as a superior man must do, and chewed the tip of a bullock's tongue, which luckily was in my waistcoat-pocket, ready for great emergency; and which, if a man keeps going on with, he may go, like the great

Elijah, forty days, and feel no hunger. At least, I have heard so, and can believe it, having seen men who told me so; but I would rather have it proved by another man's experience.

While I was looking on at these things, down came Parson Chowne himself, in a happy mood, and riding the black mare, now brought out of dock again. The country folk all fell away from their hope of stealing something, and laid fingers to their hats, being afraid to talk of him. He, however, did no more than sign to the serving-man behind him, to acknowledge compliments (which was outside his own custom), and then he put spurs to his horse and galloped right and left through the lot of them. In my anxiety to learn what this dreadful man was up to, I slipped down through the stubs of the wood, where the faggot-cutters had been at work, gliding even upon my jersey, because of the Parson's piercing eyes, and there in the ditch I found some shelter, and spied through a bushy breastwork.

"No more than I expected," he cried, "from what I have seen of the fellow; he has fired the ship, and run away with all he could lay hands on. As a Justice of the Peace, I offer ten pounds reward for David Llewellyn, brought before me, alive or dead. Is there one of you rantipoles can row? Oh, you can. Take

this shilling, and be off with that big thief's ferry-boat, and leave it at Sam Tucker's shipyard, in the name of the Reverend Stoyle Chowne."

It went to my heart that none of the people to whom I had been so "good and kind"—to use pretty Bardie's phrase—now had the courage to stand up, and say that my character was most noble, and claim back my boat for me. Instead of that, they all behaved as if I had never ferried them; and the ingratitude of the young women made me long to be in Wales again. Because, you may say what you like; but the first point in our people is gratitude.

"Of course," cried Chowne, and his voice, though gently used, came down the wind like a bell; "of course, good people, you have not found the corpse of that wretched villain."

"Us would giv' un up, glad enough, if us only gat the loock, for tan zhilling, your Raverance. Lave aloun tan poond."

When that miserable miser said a thing so low as that, my very flesh crept on my bones, and my inmost heart was sick with being made so very little of. To myself I always had a proper sense of estimation; and to be put at this low figure made me doubt of everything. However, I came to feel, after a bit, that this is one of the trials which all good

men must put up with: neither would a common man find his corpse worth ten pounds sterling.

Betwixt my sense of public value (a definite sum, at any rate) and imagination of what my truly natural abilities might lead me to, if properly neglected, I found it a blessed hard thing to lie quiet until dark, and then slip out. And the more so, because my stock of food was all consumed by middle day; and before the sun went down, hunger of a great shape and size arose and raged within me. This is always difficult to discipline or to reason with; and to men of the common order it suggests great violence. To me it did nothing of that kind, but led me into a little shop, where I paid my money, and got my loaf. My flint and steel and tinder-box lay in my pocket handy. These I felt and felt again, and went into the woods and thought, and found that even want of food had failed to give me a thorough-going and consistent appetite. Because, for the first time in my life, I had shaped a strong resolve, and sworn to the Lord concerning it—to commit a downright crime, and one which I might be hanged for. Although every one who has entered into my sufferings and my dignity must perceive how right I was, and would never inform against me, I will only say that on Saturday evening Parson

Chowne had fourteen ricks, and on Sunday morning he had none, and might begin to understand the feelings of the many farmers who had been treated thus by him. Right gladly would I have beheld his face (so rigid and contemptuous at other people's trouble) when he should come to contemplate his own works thus brought home to him. But I could not find a hedge thick enough to screen me from his terrible piercing eyes.

This little bit of righteous action made a stir, you may be sure, because it was so contrary to the custom of the neighbourhood. Although I went to see this fire, I took the finest care to leave no evidence behind me; and even turned my bits of toggery inside out at starting. But there was a general sense in among these people, that only a foreigner could have dared to fly in the Parson's face so. I waited long enough to catch the turn of the public feeling, and finding it set hard against me, my foremost thought was the love of home.

Keeping this in view, and being pressed almost beyond bearing now, with no certainty, moreover, as to warrants coming out, and the people looking strangely, every time they met me, I could have no peace until I saw the beautiful young lady, and to her told everything. You should have seen her eyes

and cheeks, as well as the way her heart went; and the pride with which she gathered all her meaning up to speak; even after I had told her how the ricks would burn themselves.

"You dear old Davy," she said, "I never thought you had so much courage. You are the very bravest man—but stop, did you burn the whole of them?"

"Every one burned itself, your ladyship; I saw the ashes dying down, and his summer-house as well took fire, through the mischief of the wind, and all his winter stock of wood, and his tool-house, and his——"

"Any more, any more, old David?"

"Yes, your ladyship, his cow-house, after the cows were all set free, and his new cart-shed fifty feet long, also his carpenter's shop, and his cider-press."

"You are the very best man," she answered, with her beautiful eyes full upon me, "that I have seen, since I was a child. I must think what to do for you. Did you burn anything more, old Davy?"

"The fire did, your ladyship, three large barns, and a thing they call a 'linhay;' also the granary, and the meal-house, and the apple-room, and the churn-room, and only missed the dairy by a little nasty slant of wind."

"What a good thing you have done! There is

scarcely any man I know, that would have shown such courage. Mr Llewellyn, is there anything in my power to do for you?"

Nothing could have pleased me more than to find this fair young lady rejoicing in this generous manner at the Parson's misadventure. And her delight in the contemplation made me almost feel repentance at the delicate forbearance of the flames from the Rectory itself. But I could not help reflecting how intense and bitter must be this young harmless creature's wrong received and dwelling in her mind, ere she could find pleasure from wild havoc and destruction.

"There is one thing you can do," I answered very humbly; "and it is my only chance to escape from misconstruction. I never thought, at my time of life, to begin life so again. But I am now a homeless man, burned out of my latest refuge, and with none to care for me. Perhaps I may be taken up to-morrow, or the next day. And with such a man against me, it must end in hanging."

"I never heard such a thing," she said: "he tries to burn you in your bed, after blowing you up, and doing his very best to drown you; and then you are to be hanged because there is a bonfire on his premises! It is impossible, Mr Llewellyn, to think twice of such a thing."

"Your ladyship may be right," I answered; "and in the case of some one else, reasoning would convince me. But if I even stop to think twice, it will lead to handcuffs; and handcuffs lead to halter."

At this she began to be frightened much, and her fright grew worse, as I described the unpleasantness of hanging; how I had helped myself to run up nine good men at the yard-arm. And a fine thing for their souls, no doubt, to stop them from more mischief, and let them go up while the Lord might think that other men had injured them.

"Your ladyship," I began again, when I saw all her delicate colour ebbing; "it is not for a poor hunted man to dare to beg a favour."

"Oh yes, it is, it is," she cried; "that is the very time to do it. Anything in my power, David, after all you have done for me."

"Then all that I want of your ladyship is to get me rated aboard of Captain Drake Bampfylde's ship."

She coloured up so clearly that I was compelled to look away: and then she said—

"How do you know—I mean who can have told you that—but are you not too—perhaps a little——"

"Too old, your ladyship? Not a day. I am worth half-a-dozen of those young chips who have got no

bones to their legs yet. And as for shooting, if his Honour wants a man to train a cannon, I can hit a marlinspike with a round-shot, at a mile and a half, as soon as I learn the windage."

For I knew by this time that Captain Bampfylde's ship, the Alcestis, was in reserve, as a feeder for the Royal Navy, to catch young hands and train them to some knowledge of sea-life, and smartness, and the styles of gunnery. And who could teach them these things better than a veteran like me?

Miss Carey smiled at my conceit, as perhaps she considered it; "Well, Davy, if you can fire a gun, as well as you can a hay-rick——"

"No more, your ladyship, I beseech you. Even walls like these have ears; and every time I see my shadow, I take it for a constable. I am sure there are two men after me——"

"Have you then two shadows?" she asked, in her peculiar pleasant way: "at any rate no one will dare to meddle with you, or any of us, I should hope, in the General's own house. Come in here. I expect, or at least I think, there is some prospect of a boat from the Alcestis coming up the river this very evening. Perhaps you have some baggage."

"No, your ladyship, not a bit. They burned me out of all of it. But I saved some money kindly,

by special grace of God, at the loss of all my leg-hair."

I ought not to have said that, I knew, directly after uttering it, to a young lady who could not yet be up to things of that kind.

CHAPTER XLI.

THE RIGHT MAN IN THE RIGHT PLACE.

THE very next day, I was afloat as a seaman of the Royal Navy of the United Kingdom. None but a sailor can imagine what I felt and what I thought. Here for years I had been adrift from the very work God shaped me for, wrecked before my time by undue violence of a Frenchman. Also I had bred my son up to supply my place a little; and a very noble fellow, though he could not handle cutlash or lay gun as I had done. But he might have come to it if he ever had come to my own time of life. This however had been cut short by the will of Providence; and now I felt bound to make good for it. Only one thing grieved me, viz., to find the war declining. This went to my heart the more, because our navy had not done according to its ancient fame, anywhere but at Gibraltar and with Admiral Rodney,

in the year before I rejoined it. Off the coast of America, things I could not bear to hear; also the loss of the Royal George, the capture of the Leeward Islands, and of Minorca by the French; and even a British sloop of war taken by a French corvette. Such things moved me to the marrow, after all I had seen and done; and all our ship's company understood that I returned to the service in the hope to put a stop to it. This reclaiming of me to the thing that I was meant for took less time than I might use to bring a gun to its bearings. That beautiful Miss Carey managed everything with Captain Drake, and in less than fifty kisses, they had settled my affairs. I could have no more self-respect, if I said another word.

But the King and the nation won the entire benefit of this. It came to pass that I was made a second instructor in gunnery, with an entire new kit found me, and six-and-twopence a-week appointed, together with second right to stick a fork into the boiler. Of course I could not have won all this by favour; but showed merit. It had however been allowed me, under an agreement (just enough, yet brought about by special love of justice) that I should receive a month ashore at Newton-Nottage, in the course of the spring, whenever it might suit

our cruising. My private affairs demanded this; as well as love of neighbours, and strong desire to let them know how much they ought to make of me.

How I disdained my rod and pole, and the long-shore life and the lubberly ways, when I felt once more the bounding of the open water, the spring of the buoyant timbers answering every movement gallantly, the generous vehemence of the canvas, and the noble freedom of the ocean winds around us! The rush up a liquid mountain, and the sway on the balance of the world, then the plunge into the valley, almost out of the sight of God, though we feel Him hovering over us. While the heart leaps with the hope of yet more glorious things to come—the wild delight, the rage, suspense, and majesty of battle.

Nothing vexed me now so much as to hear from private people, and even from the public sailors, that the nation wanted peace. No nation ever should want peace, until it has thoroughly thrashed the other, or is bound by wicked luck to knock under hopelessly. And neither of those things had befallen England at this period. But I have not skill enough to navigate in politics. And before we had been long at sea, we spoke a full-rigged ship from Hamburg, which had touched at Falmouth; and two German boys, in training for the British Navy, let

us know that peace was signed between Great Britain, France, and Spain, as nearly as might be on Valentine's Day of the year 1783. A sad and hard thing we found to believe it, and impossible to be pleased after such practice of gunnery.

Nevertheless it was true enough, and confirmed by another ship; and now a new Ministry was in office under a man of the name of Fox, doubtless of that nature also, ready always to run to earth. Nothing more could be hoped except to put up with all degradation. A handful of barbarous fellows, wild in the woods and swamps of America, most of them sent from this home-country through their contempt of discipline, fellows of this sort had been able (mainly by skulking and shirking fight) to elude and get the better of His Britannic Majesty's forces, and pretend to set up on their own account, as if they could ever get on so. No one who sees these things as clearly as I saw them then and there, can doubt as to the call I felt to rejoin the Royal Navy.

Of course I could not dream that now there was rising in a merchant-ship captured from the Frenchmen, and fitted with two dozen guns, a British Captain such as never had been seen before, nor will ever be again; and whose skill and daring left the Frenchmen one hope only—to run ashore, and stay there.

However, not to dwell too long on the noblest and purest motives, it did not take me quite three weeks to supersede the first instructor, and to get him sent ashore, and find myself hoisted into his berth, with a rise of two-and-two per week. This gave me eight-and-fourpence, with another stripe on my right arm, and what was far more to the purpose, added greatly to the efficiency of the British Navy. Because the man was very well, or at any rate well enough, in his way and in his manners, and quite worth his wages; but to see him train a gun, and to call him first Instructor! Captain Bampfylde saw, in twenty minutes, that I could shoot this fine fellow's head off, unwilling as I was to give offence, and delicate about priming. And all the men felt at once the power of a practised hand set over them. I saw that the Navy had fallen back very much in the matter of gunnery, in the time of the twenty years, or so, since I had been Gun-captain; and it came into my head to show them many things forgotten. The force of nature carried me into this my proper position; and the more rapidly, because it happened to occur to me that here was the very man pointed out, as it were by the hand of Providence, for Parson Chowne to blow up next. Our Captain had the very utmost confidence that could be in him, and he stood on his

legs with a breadth that spoke to the strength of his constitution; a man of enduring gravity. Also his weight was such that the Parson never could manage to blow him up, with any powder as yet admitted into the Royal Dockyards. I liked this man, and I let him know it; but I thought it better for him to serve his country on shore a little, after being so long afloat; if (as I put it to his conscience) he could keep from poaching, and from firing stackyards, or working dangerous ferries. He told me that he had no temptation towards what I had mentioned; but on the other hand felt inclined, after so many years at sea, to have a family of his own; and a wife, if found consistent. This I assured him I could manage; and in a few words did so; asking for nothing more on his part than entire confidence. My nature commanded this from him; and we settled to exchange our duties in a pleasant manner. I gave him introduction to the liveliest of the farmer's daughters, telling him what their names were. And being overfull of money, he paid me half-a-crown apiece, for thirteen girls to whom I gave him letters of commendation. This was far too cheap, with all of them handsomer than he had any right to; and three of them only daughters, and two with no more than grandmothers. But I love to help a fellow-sailor;

and thus I got rid of him. For our Captain had the utmost faith in this poor man's discretion, and had thought, before I said it, of laying him up at Narnton Court, to keep a general look-out, because his eyes were failing. I did not dare to offer more opinion than was asked for, but it struck me that if Parson Chowne had been too clever for David Llewellyn, and made the place too hot for him, he was not likely to be outwitted by Naval Instructor Heaviside.

However, I could not see much occasion for Chowne to continue his plots any longer, or even to keep watch on the house, unless it were from jealousy of our Captain's visits. As far as any one might fathom that unfathomable Parson, he had two principal ends in view. The first was to get possession of Miss Carey and all her property, by making her Mrs Chowne, No. 4; the second, which would help him towards the first, was to keep up against poor Captain Drake the horrible charge of having killed those two children, whose burial had been seen as before related. And here I may mention what I had forgotten, through entire want of vindictive feeling—to wit, that I had, as a matter of duty, contrived to thrash very heavily both of those fellows on Braunton Burrows, who had been spying on Narnton Court, and committed such outrages against me.

Without doing this, I could not have left the county conscientiously.

And now on board the Alcestis, a rattling fine frigate of 44 guns, it gave me no small pleasure to find that (although the gunnery practice was not so good as I was accustomed to), in seamanship, and discipline, and general smartness, there was little to be reasonably complained of; especially when it was borne in mind what our special duty was, and why we were kept in commission when so many other ships were paid off, at the conclusion of the war. Up to that time the Alcestis had orders to cruise off the western coasts, not only on account of some French privateers which had made mischief with our shipping, but also as a draft-ship for receiving and training batches of young hands, who were transferred, as occasion offered, to Halifax, or the West Indies station. And now as the need for new forces ceased, Captain Drake was beginning to expect orders for Spithead to discharge. Instead of that, however, the Admiralty had determined to employ this ship, which had done so much in the way of education, for the more thorough settlement of a question upon which they differed from the general opinion of the Navy, and especially of the Ordnance Board. This was concerning the value of a new kind

of artillery invented by a clever Scotchman, and called a "Carronade," because it was cast at certain iron-works on the banks of the river Carron. This gun is now so thoroughly well known and approved, and has done so much to help us to our recent triumphs, that I need not stop to describe it, although at first it greatly puzzled me. It was so short, and light, and handy, and of such large caliber, moreover with a great chamber for the powder, such as a mortar has, that at first it quite upset me, knowing that I must appear familiar, yet not being so. However, I kept in the background, and nodded and shook my head so that every one misunderstood me differently.

That night I arose and studied it, and resolved to back it up, because only Captain Drake was in its favour, and the first lieutenant. Heaviside was against it strongly, although he said that six months ago the Rainbow, an old 44, being refitted with nothing else but carronades of large caliber, had created such terror in a French ship of almost equal force, that she fired a broadside of honour, and then surrendered to the Rainbow. But to come back to our Alcestis, at the time I was promoted to first place in gunnery. Over and above her proper armament of long guns, eighteen and twelve pounders, she carried on the quarter-deck six 24-pounder carronades, and

two of 18 in the forecastle. So that in truth she had fifty-two guns, and was a match in weight of metal for a French ship of sixty guns, as at that time fitted. Afterwards it was otherwise; and their artillery outweighed ours, as much as a true Briton outweighs them.

Now Naval Instructor Mr Llewellyn had such a busy time of it, and was found so indispensable on board the Alcestis, that I do assure you they could not spare him for even a glimpse of old Newton-Nottage, until the beginning of the month of May. But as I always find that people become loose in their sense of duty, unless girt up well with money (even as the ancients used to carry their cash in their girdles), I had taken advantage of a run ashore at Pembroke, to send our excellent Parson Lougher a letter containing a £5 note, as well as a few words about my present position, authority, and estimation. I trusted to him as a gentleman not to speak of those last matters to any untrustworthy person whatever; because there would be six months' pension falling due to me at Swansea, at the very time of writing; and which of course I meant to have; for my zeal in overlooking my wound could not replace me unwounded, I trow. But knowing our Government to be thoroughly versed in every form of stinginess and

peculation (which was sure to be doubled now a Fox was in), I thought that they might even have the dishonesty to deny me my paltry pittance on account of ancient merit and great valour, upon the shabby plea that now I was on full pay again! They would have done so, I do believe, if their own clumsy and careless ways had allowed them to get scent of it. But they do things so stupidly, that a clever man need never allow them to commit roguery upon him. And by means of discreet action, I was enabled for fourteen years, to draw the pension I had won so nobly, as well as the pay I was earning so grandly. However, these are trifles.

The £5 note was for Mother Jones, to help our Bunny with spring-clothes, and to lay out at her discretion for my grandchild's benefit, supposing (as I must needs suppose) that Churchwarden Morgan, in face of his promise, would refuse indignantly to accept a farthing for the child's nourishment. He disappointed me, however, by accepting four pound ten, and Mrs Jones was quite upset; for even Bunny never could have eaten that much in the time. Charles was a worthy man enough (as undertakers always are), but it was said that he could not do according to his lights, when fancy brought his wife across them. Poor Mother Jones was so put out,

that she quite forgot what she was doing until she had spent the ten shillings of change in drawers for her middle children. And so poor Bunny got nothing at all; nor even did poorer Bardie. For this little dear I had begged to be bought, for the sake of her vast imagination, nothing less than a two-shilling doll, jointed both at knee and elbow, as the Dutchmen turn them out. It was to be naked (like Parson Chowne's folk), but with the girls at the well stirred up to make it more becoming. And then Mother Jones was to go to Sker, and in my name present it.

All things fail, unless a man himself goes and looks after them. And so my £5 note did; and when I was able to follow it, complaint was too late, as usual. But you should have seen the village on the day when our Captain Drake—as we delighted to call him—found himself for the first time able to carry out his old promise to me, made beneath the very eyes of his true love, Isabel. The thought of this had long been chafing in between his sense of honour, and of duty set before him by the present Naval Board. And but for his own deeper troubles, though I did my best for ease, he must have felt discomfort. If I chose, I could give many tokens of what he thought of me, not expressed, nor even

hinted; yet to my mind palpable. But as long as our Navy lasts, no man will dare to intrude on his Captain.

Be it enough, and it was enough, that his Majesty's 44-gun ship Alcestis brought up, as near as her draught allowed, to Porthcawl Point, on the 5th of May 1783. This was by no means my desire, because it went against my nature to exhibit any grandeur. And I felt in my heart the most warm desire that Master Alexander Macraw might happen to be from home that day. Nothing could have grieved me more, than for a man of that small nature to behold me stepping up in my handsome uniform, with all the oars saluting me, and the second lieutenant in the stern-sheets crying, "Farewell, Mr David!" also officership marked upon every piece of my clothes in sight; and the dignity of my bearing not behind any one of them. But as my evil luck would have it, there was poor Sandy Mac himself, and more half-starved than ever. Such is the largeness of my nature, that I sank all memory of wrongs, and upon his touching his hat to me I gave him an order for a turbot, inasmuch as my clothes were now too good, and my time too valuable, to permit of my going fishing.

This, however, was nothing at all, compared with

what awaited me among the people at the well. All Newton was assembled there to welcome and congratulate me, and most of them called me "Captain Llewellyn," and every one said I looked ten years younger in my handsome uniform. I gave myself no airs whatever—that I leave for smaller men—but entered so heartily into the shaking of hands, that if I had been a pump, the well beneath us must have gone quite dry. But all this time I was looking for Bunny, who was not among them: and presently I saw short legs of a size and strength unparalleled, except by one another, coming at a mighty pace down the yellow slope of sand, and scattering the geese on the small green patches. Mrs Morgan had kept her to smarten up,—and really she was a credit to them, so clean, and bright, and rosy-faced. At first she was shy of my grand appearance; but we very soon made that right.

Now I will not enlarge upon or even hint at the honour done me for having done such honour to my native place, because as yet I had done but little, except putting that coat on, to deserve it. Enough that I drew my salary for attending to the old church clock, also my pension at Swansea, and was feasted and entertained, and became for as long as could be expected the hero of the neighbourhood. And I

found that Mother Jones had kept my cottage in such order, that after a day or two I was able to go to Sker for the purpose of begging the favour of a visit from Bardie.

But first, as in duty bound, of course, I paid my respects to Colonel Lougher. As luck would have it, both the worthy Colonel and Lady Bluett were gone from home; but my old friend Crumpy, their honest butler, kindly invited me in, and gave me an excellent dinner in his own pantry; because he did not consider it proper that an officer of the Royal Navy should dine with the maids in the kitchen, however unpretending might be his behaviour. And here, while we were exchanging experience over a fine old cordial, in bursts the Honourable Rodney, without so much as knocking at the door. Upon seeing me his delight was such that I could forgive him anything; and his admiration of my dress, when I stood up and made the salute to him, proved that he was born a sailor. A fine young fellow he was as need be, in his twelfth year now, and come on a mitching expedition from the great grammar-school at Cowbridge. To drink his health, both Crumpy and myself had courage for another glass; and when I began to tell sea-stories, with all the emphasis and expression flowing out of my uniform, he was so over-

powered that he insisted on a hornpipe. This, although it might be now considered under dignity, I could not refuse as a mark of respect for him, and for the service; and when I had executed, as perhaps no other man can, this loyal and inimitable dance, his feelings were carried away so strongly that he offered all the money left him by a course of school-work (and amounting to fourpence-halfpenny) if I would only agree to smuggle him on board our Alcestis, when she should come to fetch me.

This, of course, I could not think of, even for a hundred pounds; and much as I longed for the boy to have the play of his inclination. And in the presence of Crumpy too, who with all his goodwill to me, would be sure to give evidence badly, if his young master were carried away! And under such love and obligation to the noble Colonel, I behaved as a man should do, when having to deal with a boyish boy; that is to say, I told his guardians on the next opportunity.

But to break away at once from all these trifling matters, only one day came to pass before I went for Bardie. All along the sea-coast I was going very sadly; half in hopes, but more in fear, because I had bad news of her. What little they could tell at Newton was that Delushy was almost dead, by means

of a dreadful whooping-cough, all throughout the winter, and the small caliber of her throat. And Charles Morgan had no more knowledge of my warm feeling thitherway, than to show me that he had been keeping some boards of sawn and seasoned elm, two feet six in length, and in breadth ten inches, from what he had heard about her health, and the likelihood of her measurement. When I heard this, you might knock me down, in spite of all my uniform, with a tube of macaroni. People have a foolish habit, when a man comes home again, of keeping all the bad news from him, and pushing forward all the good. If this had not been done to me, I never could have slept a wink, ere going to Sker Manor.

To me that old house always seemed even more desolate and forlorn with the summer sunshine on it, than in the fogs and storms of winter ; perhaps from the bareness of the sand-hills, and the rocks, and dry-stone walls, showing more in the brightness, and when woods and banks are fairest. I looked in vain for a moving creature; there seemed to be none for miles around, except a sullen cormorant sleeping far away at sea. Only little Dutch was howling in some lonely corner slowly, as when her five young masters died.

As I approached the door in fear of being too late

to say good-bye to my pretty little one, yet trying to think how well it might be for her poor young life to flutter to some guardian angel, my old enemy Black Evan stood and barred the way for me. I doubt if he knew me, at first sight; and beyond any doubt at all, I never should have known him, if I had chanced to meet him elsewhere. For I had not set eyes on his face from the day when he frightened us so at the Inquest; and in those ten months, what a change from rugged strength to decrepitude!

"You cannot see any one in this house," he said very quietly, and of course in Welsh; "every one is very busy, and in great trouble every one."

"Evan black, I feel sorrow for you. And have felt it, through all your troubles. Take the hand of a man who is come with goodwill, and to help you."

He put out his hand, and its horn was gone. I found it flabby, cold, and trembling. A year ago he had been famous for crushing everything in his palm.

"You cannot help us; neither can any man born of a woman," he answered, with his black eyes big with tears: "it is the will of the Lord to slay all whom He findeth dear to me."

"Is Delushy dead?" I asked, with a great sob rising in my throat, like wadding rammed by an untaught man.

"The little sweetheart is not yet dead; but she cannot live beyond the day. She lies panting with lips open. What food has she taken for five days?"

Any one whose nature leads him to be moved by little things, would have been distressed at seeing such a most unlucky creature finishing her tender days in that quiet childish manner, among strangers' tenderness. In her weak, defeated state, with all her clever notions gone, she lay with a piece of striped flannel round her, the lips, that used to prattle so, now gasping for another breath, and the little toes that danced so, limp, and frail, and feebly twitching. The tiny frame was too worn to cough, and could only shudder faintly, when the fit came through it. Yet I could see that the dear little eyes looked at me, and tried to say to the wandering wits that it was Old Davy; and the helpless tongue made effort to express that love of beauty, which had ever seemed to be the ruling baby passion. The crown and stripes upon my right arm were done in gold—at my own expense, for Government only allowed yellow thread. Upon these her dim eyes fastened, with a pleasure of surprise; and though she could not manage it, she tried to say, "How boofely!"

CHAPTER XLII.

THE LITTLE MAID, AND THE MIDSHIPMAN.

In this sad predicament, I looked from one to other of them, hoping for some counsel. There was Moxy, crying quite as if it were her own child almost; and there was Peggy the milking-maid, allowed to offer her opinion (having had a child, although not authorised to produce one); also myself in uniform, and Black Evan coming up softly, with a newly-discovered walk. And yet not one had a word to say except "poor little dear!" sometimes; and sometimes, "we must trust in God."

"I tell you," I cried; "that never does. And I never knew good come of it. A man's first place is to trust to himself, and to pray to the Lord to help him. Have you nothing more to say?"

"Here be all her little things," Black Evan whispered to his wife; "put them ready to go with her." His two great hands were full of little odds and ends

which she had gathered in her lonely play along the beach, and on the sandhills.

"Is that all that you can do? Watkin could do more than that. And now where is young Watkin?"

They assured me there was no more to do. They were tired of trying everything. As for Watkin, he it was who had brought the malady into the house, and now they had sent him for change of air to an uncle he had at Llynvi. Concerning Delushy, there was nothing for her to do, but to die, and to go to heaven.

"She shan't die, I tell you," I cried out strongly: "you are a set of hopeless ones. Twice have I saved her life before, when I was only a fisherman. I am a man in authority now; and please God, I am just in time to save her life, once more, my friends. Do you give her up, you stupids?"

They plainly thought that I was gone mad, by reason of my rise in life; and tenfold sure of it they were, when I called for a gown of red Pembrokeshire flannel, belonging to Moxy for ten years now. However poor Moxy herself went for it; and I took the child out of her stuffy bed, and the hot close room containing it, and bore her gently in my arms with the red flannel round her, and was shocked to

find how light she was. Down the great staircase I took her, and then feeling her breath still going, and even a stir of her toes, as if the life was coming back to her, what did I do but go out of doors, into the bright May sunshine? I held her uncommon and clearly-shaped face on my bosom, to front the sunlight, and her long eyelashes lifted, and her small breast gave three sighs.

"Good-bye all of you," I cried: "she comes away with me this minute. Peggy may come, if she likes, with half a sheep on her back to-morrow."

And so she did: and I could not give her less than half-a-crown for it; because of the difference and the grace of God to darling Bardie. In my arms the whole way home, she lay like a new-born lamb almost, with her breath overcome at first, and heavily drawn, while her eyes were waking. Then as the air of the open heaven found its way to her worn-out lungs, down her quiet eyelids dropped, with a sleepy sense of happiness, and her weak lips dreamed of smiling, and her infant breast began to rise and fall quite steadily. And so she fell into a great deep sleep, and so I took her to my home, and the air of Newton saved her.

Our Bunny was very good. There could hardly have been any better child, when her victuals were

not invaded. She entered into Bardie's condition, and took quite a motherly attitude towards her. And while the tiny one lay so weak, Bunny felt that the lead of mind was hers for the present, and might be established by a vigorous policy. However in this point she was wrong, or at any rate failed to work it out. In a fortnight Bardie was mistress again; and poor Bunny had to trot after her.

Now although it was very pleasant to see the thankfulness of Black Evan, when he came over every day, and brought his pockets full of things, and tried to look pleased when truthful Bardie refused downright to kiss him; pleasant also for me to be begged not only to fish, but even to shoot—perhaps because now the wrong time of year—in and over and through a place, where the mere sight of my hat had been sure to lead to a black eye under it; in despite of all these pleasures, I perceived that business must be thoroughly attended to. And taking this view I was strengthened in my own opinions, by the concurrence of every neighbour possessing a particle of sense. Not only mother Jones—who might be hard, from so much family—but also the landlord of the Jolly quite agreed with the landlady, and even Crumpy, a man of the utmost tenderness ever known almost, and who must admire children,

because he never yet had owned any—all these authorities agreed that I must take care what I was about. For my part, finding their opinions go beyond my own almost, or at any rate take a form of words different from my own, and having no assurance how it might end, I felt inclined to go back, and give fair-play to both sides of the argument.

But, as often happens when a man desires to see the right, and act strictly up to it, the whole affair was interrupted, and my attention called away by another important matter, and the duties springing out of it. And this came to pass in the following manner. It happened upon Oak-apple morning that I was down on a little sandhill, smoking a pipe, and with both children building houses upon my pumps. These pumps had lovely buckles of the very latest regulation; and it was a pleasure to regard them when at leisure, and reflect upon their quality, as well as signification. The children, however, took this matter from another point of view; and there was scarcely anything to their little minds more delightful than to obscure my pumps with sand, and put up a tower over them. And then if I moved, down came the whole; and instead of themselves, they laughed at me. I had worked very hard in the Alcestis, and for almost a week after landing found it

a most delicious thing, because so incomprehensible, to have nothing whatever to do. But long before now, I was tired of it, and yearned to put on my old slops again, and have a long day of fishing as if Bunny's life and mine hung on it. And when I gave a feast of turbot caught by that excellent Sandy Macraw (and paid for at just what he chose to charge), you would not have guessed it, but such were my feelings, that I only could make believe to eat. And Sandy himself, by special desire, took the foot of the table, and went largely into everything; but behaved uncommonly well, for him.

Now this is just the way I keep on going out of the proper track. If I could not train a gun, much straighter than I can tell a story, France would have conquered England, I believe, in spite of Nelson. It is the excess of windage, coming down to me from great bards, which prevents my shot from flying point-blank, as it ought to do. Nevertheless the village children loved my style, especially since his Majesty had embellished me. And this was why I shunned the well, and sate among the sandhills; for really it was too hard to be expected to have in throat a new story, never heard before, every time a little pitcher came on the head of a little maid, to be filled, and then to go off again. Bardie and Bunny

knew better than that, and never came for stories, till the proper time—the twilight.

Now, as I was longing much to sacrifice all dignity, and throw off gold-lace and blue cloth, and verily go at the congers (which I did the next day, and defied the parish to think what it chose of me), I beheld a pair of horses, with a carriage after them, coming in a lively manner towards my nest of refuge.

"It is useless now," I cried aloud; "I can hope for no more peace. Everybody knows me, or believes it right to know me."

Nevertheless, on the whole, I felt pleased, when I saw that the harness was very bright, and the running-gear knopped with silver. And my amazement was what you may enter into, when really the driver proved to be no bigger than that little Master Rodney Bluett. He had the proper coachman by his side, for fear of accidents; but to me, who had seen so much of horses now in Devonshire, it appeared a most rash thing to allow such a boy to navigate.

However, having caught me thus, he jumped out without accident, while the coachman touched his hat to me, or to his Majesty as now represented by me.

Then that noble boy—as he ought no doubt to be

entitled, being the son of a nobleman, although in common parlance styled an honourable boy, which to my mind is no more than a simple contradiction—up he ran with his usual haste, expecting to find only Bunny and me. But his astonishment was worth seeing, on account of his being such a fair young chap, when suddenly he beheld poor Bardie, standing weakly on her legs not quite re-established yet, and in her shy manner of inner doctrine taking observation of him. A more free-and-easy schoolboy there could scarcely be than Rodney; and as for our Bunny, he used to toss her, until her weight overpowered him. But with this little lady looking so pale, and drawn, and delicate, he knew (as if by instinct) that he must begin very gingerly.

"Captain Llewellyn," he said; "I am come to tell you that my mind is quite made up. I mean to go to sea as soon as I can have my clothes made."

"But, young sir," I answered with a wish to humour this fine boy, yet a desire to escape the noble Colonel's anger; "it is useless now to go to sea. There is no war. We must wait, and trust the Lord to send one."

"And how shall I be fit to manage a ship, and fight our enemies, unless I begin at once, and practise, Captain Llewellyn?"

In this there was so much truth, as well as sense of discipline, moreover such fine power of hope for another good bout at the French, that I looked at my pocket-lappets for an answer; and found none.

"I can stand a great deal," he cried; "on account of my age, and so on. But I can't stand Latin and Greek, and I cannot stand being put off always. I know what they want me to do. They want me to grow too old for the Navy! And I do believe they will manage it. I am getting twelve, every day almost, and I can pull a pair of oars, and fire a cannon nine inches long, and sail a boat, if it doesn't blow."

"For all that I can answer, sir," my words were, being proud of him: "and you know who taught you this, and that. And you know that he always did impress upon your early mind the necessity of stern discipline, and obedience to superiors. Your first duty is to your King and country, in the glorious time of war. But with a wretched peace prevailing, your duty is to the powers placed by Providence to look after you."

"I have heard that till I am sick of it," he answered rather rudely, for I seemed to myself to have put it well: "is that all you can do for me? I had better not have come at all. Look, I have

five guineas here, given me yesterday, and all good ones. I will put them just in there—and my word of honour——"

"My boy, if it were fifty, five hundred, or five thousand, would an officer of the Royal Navy think of listening to them? You have hurt my sense of honour."

"I beg your pardon, Captain Llewellyn," he said, hanging down his head: "but you used not to be quite so proud. You used to like five shillings even."

"That is neither here nor there," I answered very loftily, and increasing his confusion: "five shillings honourably earned no man need be ashamed of. But what you have offered me is a bribe, for the low purpose of cheating your good uncle and dear mother. You ought to sink into the sand, sir."

He seemed pretty nearly fit to do so, for I put a stern face on, though all the time I could hardly keep from laughing most good-naturedly; when a little hand went into his, and a little face defied me. Poor sick Bardie had watched every word, and though unable to understand, she took hot sides with the weaker one.

"'E san't sink into 'e sand, I tell 'a, 'e yicked bad eold Davy. 'Hot's a done to be 'colded so? I's

very angy with 'a indeed, to go on so to a gentleyum."

By what instinct could she tell that this was a young gentleman? By the same, I suppose, by which he knew that she was a young lady. And each of them ready to stand up for the other immediately! It made me laugh: and yet it is a sad thing to go into.

"Now, my boy," I began, for fear of losing the upper hand of them; "you are old enough to understand good sense when put before you. It is true enough that if you mean to walk the planks like a sailor, you can hardly begin too soon at the time of life you are come to. I was afloat at half your age, so far as I can remember. But I am bound to lay before you two very serious questions. You will have to meet, and never escape from, every kind of dirt, and hardship, narrowness, and half-starving—not an atom of comfort left, such as you are accustomed to. Danger I will not speak of, because it would only lead you on to it. But the other thing is this: By going to sea, you will for ever grieve and drive out of your prospects not only your good uncle, but perhaps almost your mother."

I thought I had made a most excellent speech, and Bardie looked up with admiration, to know when I

meant to finish. But to my surprise, young Rodney took very little heed of it.

"That shows how much you know, old Davy! Why I was come on purpose to tell you that they are tired out at last: and that I may go to sea, if only you will appoint me a place on board of your ship Alcestis. Now do, Captain Llewellyn, do, and I will never forget it to you, if ever I become a great man."

"My dear boy, I would do it this minute if I had the power. But though they call me 'Captain' here, I am only Captain of a gun, and Instructor of Artillery. And even our Captain himself could not do it. He could only take you as a volunteer, and now there is no call for them. You must get your appointment as midshipman in the regular way from London. And the chances are fifty to one against your joining the Alcestis. That is to say, of course, unless you have some special interest."

His countenance fell to the lowest ebb, and great tears stood in his bold blue eyes; but presently the hopeful spirit of youth and brave lineage returned.

"I will write to my brother in London," he said; "he has never done me a good turn yet; perhaps he will begin this time."

Not to be too long about it, either by that or some other influence, he obtained his heart's desire, and

was appointed midshipman, with orders to join the Alcestis, upon her next appearance off our coast. You should have seen the fuss he made, and his mother too, about his outfit; and even Colonel Lougher could not help being much excited. As for me, I was forced to go to and fro betwixt Newton and Candleston Court every day, and twice a-day, for the purpose of delivering judgment upon every box that came. But when Master Rodney made me toss his spelling-books and grammar at his breast, to practise parrying with his little dirk, I begged him to let me take them home, as soon as he was tired. I have them now, with his little stabs in them, and they make me almost independent of the schoolmaster in writing.

Not only was I treated so that I need not have bought any food at all—except for Bardie and Bunny—but also employed at a pleasant price to deliver lessons every morning as to the names of sails and ropes and the proper style of handling them. We used to walk down to the hard sea-shore, with a couple of sharp sticks, whenever the tide allowed fair drawing-room. And the two little children enjoyed it almost as much as the rising hero did. The difficulty was to keep the village children, who paid nothing, from taking the benefit of my lecture as

much as Midshipman Bluett did. And they might have done so, if they cared to do it, for I like a good large audience; but they always went into playing hopscotch, in among my ropes and yards, when all done beautifully in fine sand, and ready to begin almost—for the proper way is to have a ship spread naked first, and then hoist sail, if you want to show its meaning. I could not bear to be hard upon these young ones—and some of them good mother Jones's own—all in a mess of activity; and I tried to think that it was all right, because money was earning anyhow. But I could not reconcile it with my sense of duty to make a game of well-paid work; therefore I kept the children out, in a manner I need not now describe, only you may rely upon it for real ingenuity; for children are worse to manage than folk who have been through having them.

CHAPTER XLIII.

A FINE PRICE FOR BARDIE.

Now our own two little darlings had behaved so beautifully, gazing at the bad works of the others from a distance only, though sadly pushed to share in them, and keeping their little garters up, when the others were hopscotching; also feeling, and pointing out, and almost exaggerating the ruin wrought by the other small ones (which they durst not come down to help), that I determined to give them both a magnificent Sunday dinner. I would gladly have had the young midshipman down—for on Sunday he was such an ornament, as good as the best church-window!—but now our time was almost up; and though his mother would have let him come to grace my humble cottage, the Colonel insisted that he must go to take farewell of some excellent aunts, from whom he had large expectations, and who had ordered him up for the Sunday to the neighbourhood

of Cardiff. However, we could get on very well with our own aristocracy only, which I was sure poor Bardie was, though without any aunts to dine her, and it only made me the more determined to have a family party fed on good fare. We envied nobody as we sate down, and the little ones put up both hands, according to some ancient teaching. For the first course, we had conger, baked; a most nourishing, excellent dish, full of jelly and things for children. And this one was stuffed, like a loaded cannon, with meat-balls, pork fat, and carraways. Bunny went at him as if she had never secured such a chance in her life before, but Bardie seemed inclined to wait for what was coming afterwards, and spent the time in watching Bunny with admiration and contempt mixed, as they are on a child's face only.

Then I brought in the dish of the day, with Bunny skipping and going about, and scorching her fingers to help me; but Bardie (having gone into her grandeur) sitting at table steadfastly, and with a resolute mind to know what it was before approval. She had the most delicate nostrils, but what I brought made her open them. Because I had the very best half of the very best ham ever cured in our parish, through a whole series of good-luck. Luck, and skill, and the will of the Lord, must all combine for a first-

rate ham; and here they were met, and no mistake, both by one another and by excellent cooking afterwards. It would not become me to say any more, when it comes to my mind that the delicate gold of infant cabbage, by side of it, was also of my own planting, in a bit of black mould in a choice niche, ere Bethel Jose had tempted me. In spite of all this wonderful cheer, and the little ones going on famously, the sight of that young cabbage struck a vein of sorrow in me somewhere. To go away, and leave my house and garden for whole years perhaps, and feel that it was all behind me, in neglect and loneliness, with no one to undo the windows, or to sow a row of peas, or even dib a cabbage in, and perhaps myself to find no chance of coming back to it, and none to feel the difference! Like a knife all this went through me; so that I must look upward quite, for fear of the little ones watching me.

Those two little creatures ate with a power and a heartiness enough to make anybody rejoice in the harmless glory of feeding them. After the very first taste, they never stopped to wipe their lips, or to consider anything, but dealt with what they had won, and felt, and thoroughly entered into it. Only every now and then they could not help admiring what I take to be the surest proof of a fine ham and

good cookery, that is to say, bright stripes of scarlet in between fat of a clear French white, not unlike our streaky jaspers interlaid with agate. To see that little thing, who scarce could lift a finger three weeks ago, now playing so brisk a knife and fork, filled me with gratitude and joy, so that I made up my mind to finish my dinner from the conger, and keep the rest of the ham for her.

I gave the little souls their wine—as they called it—of gooseberry-water, a good egg-cup full apiece; and away they went, like two little women, into the garden to play with it, and see who would keep it the longest. Then I put the rest of the ham in the cupboard, and returning to the conger, began to enjoy the carver's privilege of ten minutes for his own fork. But just as I had done handsomely well, and was now preparing to think about a pipe of fine Navy tobacco, and a small nip of old rum and water, suddenly my door was darkened, and there stood the very last man (save one) whom, for my comfort and calm Sabbath feeling, I could ever have wished to see.

"Peace be to this house," he began, with his hands spread out, and his eyes turned up, but his nostrils taking sniff of things: "peace be to this humble home, and the perishing flesh contained in it! Brother Davy, is it well with thee?"

"Brother Hezekiah," said I, perceiving what he was up to: "no flesh does this house contain; for that it is too humble. But in the name of the Lord, right welcome art thou to cold conger! Brother, I pray thee, arise and eat; and go forty days hence on the strength of it."

"It hath been done," replied Hezekiah, "by Divine grace and unceasing prayer. But come, old chap, I am sure you have got something better in that cupboard. Stinking fish hast thou often sold me, and lo I have striven to like it! therefore give me good meat now, and let us rejoice at thy great doings."

This speech was so full of truth that it got the upper hand of me, both by the sense of compunction and the strength of hospitality, and I could no longer deny to Perkins all that remained of poor Bardie's ham. "I have expounded the word of the Lord, I have been as Lot in your little Zoar," he cried, going on for the third help of ham; "my spirit was mighty within me, David; and Hepzibah took up the wondrous tale. Backsliding brother, where hast thou been? There is a movement and revival set afoot from my burning words and Hepzibah's prophecies, such as shall make your rotten old Church——"

"Have a drop of beer," I said, for I did not like to see him shake his fist at our church-tower.

"Well, I don't mind if I do," he answered, "now I come to think of it. Everything in its season, brother. And a drop of your old rum afterwards."

I pretended not to hear this last; for though I might stand him in twopenny ale, I saw no reason for spoiling the tops of a bottle or two that I scorned to open, even when my rheumatics had leapt from my double half-ribs to my ear-drops. So, after observing that things were locked up, I ran into the Jolly, and fetched a pint of small ale, very rapidly. Not expecting me back so soon, he had made a good round, with his knife in his hand, to see what might be hoped for. Now back he came with a groan, and said that he knew not what he was fit for. When the power of the Word came upon him, he had such spasms afterwards.

I never love to be in company with a man of this sort. When my time is come for thanking God for a fine dinner, I would rather be alongside of a simple man and a stupid one, who can sit and think with me, and say no more about it. He knew my feelings, I do believe, and enjoyed them like pickles with his meat; and after finishing every morsel, even down to the mark of the saw upon the very knuck of it, up he put his tallowy thumbs with the black nails outwards, and drew a long breath, and delivered,

"In the name of the Lord, Amen. And now, Brother David, rejoice a little, as behoves a Christian man, upon the blessed Sabbath-day."

"Hezekiah, I have rejoiced to behold your joy in feeding, and to minister thereto. Now, having fruition of fleshly things, take the word of the Lord, oh my brother, and expound doctrinally; though it be but a score of chapters. I will smoke, and hearken thee."

"Strong meat is not for babes, my son; and a babe art thou, old Dyo. Chaps like you must wait and watch for the times of edification. There is a time for sowing, and there is a time for reaping. Small ale is not meat for such as bear the burden of the day."

"'Kiah, the smith," I asked, very shortly, "what is it you would have of me?"

"Brother Davy, I have offered a blessing on thy flesh-pots; and good they were, though not manifold. It is comely that I should offer another blessing on thy vessels, Davy."

What could I do with such a man in my own house? Brother Hezekiah became, at my expense, most hospitable. I found no escape from my own bottle, without being rude to my visitor's glass; and yet I enjoyed not a single drop, for want of real

companionship. For all my wits were up in arms, as if against Parson Chowne almost; because I knew that Master Perkins wanted to make a fool of me. So I feigned to be half-seas-over, that he might think he had done it.

"Ancient friend," he began at last, when he thought that I was ripe for it; "thou hast lifted me above the height of edification. Peradventure I say words that savour not of wisdom, beloved brother, the fault is thine: here I am, and there you are."

"How can any man having a smithy of his own go on so? An thou wert not tipsy, 'Kiah, thou couldst see the contrary. I am here, and thou art there."

"Just so. You have put it wonderfully," he answered, after thinking: "we may both say right is right, which is the end of everything. Keziah said to me, 'Go seek where he is, and how he is; because I have seen noble visions of his exaltation.' And yet, you see, exalted brother, scarce the tenth part came to her."

"She knows what she is about," said I; "she dreamed of a red-hot cradle, and the hoof of Satan rocking me. Now I see the whole of it. It was Parson Chowne, and the ferry-boat, and the ketch I was all but burned in. Perkins, tell me more, my

friend. I have groaned much for neglecting the warning of the prophetess."

"How many men have groaned in vain for that same cause, old Dyo! Vainglorious males, they doubt her gift, because she is a female! Out of the mouths of babes and women—brother, I forget the passage, but it comes to that, I think. And now she hath been again in trouble."

"Concerning what, old Hezekiah? As concerning what, I pray thee?"

"Even touching the child Delushy, in the godless house of Sker. In a holy trance it hath been vouchsafed her to behold that poor kid of the flock bearing in her mouth a paper, whereupon in letters of blood was written, 'Come over, and help us.' And we have found a way to help her, with thy faithful testimony."

In his crafty sheep's-eyed manner, made of crawling piety mixed with sharp and spiteful worldliness, he began to feel my soundings towards a scheme so low and infamous, that my blood within me boiled for being forced to bear with him. He had prepared the whole plot well, and what it came to was just this: Inland there lived a wealthy smelter of the Methodist tribe, and Hezekiah was deep in his books for long supply of material. Rees ap Rees was his name, and he longed, as every year he grew older, to

make up for an ancient wrong, which was coming home to him. In the early days when he was poor, and clever, and ambitious, he had ousted his elder brother from his father's hearth, and banished him. This poor fellow fled to the colonies; and for many years no token and no news came home of him. Meanwhile Rees ap Rees was growing elderly, and worn out with money, which is a frightful thing to feel. But about a year ago, a half-cast sailor had come to his house, bringing a wretched death-scrawl from this supplanted, but never yet forgotten, and only brother. There were not a dozen lines, but they told a tale that made the rich man weep and eat dry bread for days and days. His brother having been born without the art of getting on at all, was dying for want of food and comfort, having spent his last penny to keep the mouths of his two little babes at work. These poor children had lost their mother, and were losing their father now, who with his last breath almost, forgetting wrongs, as we do in death, very humbly committed them to the charge of his rich brother. And he said that his only remaining friend, captain of the Nova Scotia, had promised to deliver them safe in Bristol, to be sent for. The dying father had no strength to speak of their names, or age, or any other particulars.

Now it so happened that Rees ap Rees was dearly fond of children, as all rich childless people are, on account of being denied them: and since his wife died, he had often thought of adopting some one. But being rich, he was fidgety now; and none of the children in his neighbourhood ever blew their noses. So here he found, as it were from heaven, two little dears coming down upon him, his next of kin and right heirs, and also enabling him to go to his parish churchyard, with a sense of duty done, although preferring to rest elsewhere, if by law allowable. You may suppose how he waited and watched; but those two little dears never came. Upon that he longed for them so much more that he offered a reward of £100 for any tidings of them, and of £200 for both or either, brought to his house in safety. Hence it will be clear enough what Hezekiah's scheme was; and half the reward was to be my own.

"All thou hast to say, good Dyo, is what thou saidest at the very time; that the ship was not called Andalusia, but to the best of thy belief was more like Nova Scotia. Also that she was bound for Bristol, and that the other baby's clothes bore no coronet, as they fancied, but the letter R. done fancifully, as might be by a freemason, such as the poor father was

said to be. That garment must be destroyed of course. I have one prepared for the child Delushy, with 'Martha ap Rees' in faint writing upon it. This the old man must find out for himself, after our overlooking it. He will then believe it tenfold. And after the sight of thy uniform, Dyo—— ha! how sayest thou, old friend? A snug little sum to invest for old age. Thou knowest the old saying, 'Scurvy in the Navy; but the Navy's self more scurvy!' When thou art discharged with three halfpence a-day, one hundred pound with accumulations, say £150 then, will help to buy sulphur for thy rheumatics. Myself will give thee ten per cent for it, upon sound security."

"It sounds very well," said I, to lead him; "one hundred and fifty pounds have a fine sound."

"Not only that, my noble boy: but the hold thou wilt have on a rich young maiden, such as Martha ap Rees will be. The old fellow can't last very long: none of those smelters ever do, and he hath heart-disease as well. Little Martha will come into £20,000 or more, and every penny of it hanging upon thee, and me, my lad. Is it well devised, is it grand, my boy; is it worthy of old 'Kiah?"

"That it is," I cried; "most worthy!"

He flourished his glass in the pride of his heart,

and even began to sing a song with a chorus of "Spankadilloes," forgetting whose holy day it was. Unfortunately I did the same; for my nature can never resist a song: moreover I wanted to think a little. Not from any desire to dwell for a moment on my own interest, but from the great temptation to make the fortunes of our poor castaway. But while I was nursing my left knee, with the foot giving time for another chorus (which was just beginning), I heard a tiny pipe, and turned round, and there was the little thing herself, dancing on one foot, and jerking the other in mockery of my attitude, nodding her head to keep time as well, and for her very life singing out, "Pankydillo, dillo, dillo," while Bunny peeping round the door-post, with a power of Sabbath feeling, looked as if the world were ending. It was clear that Bardie had not seen Perkins, whom she never could endure, else would she not have run in from the garden, to bear a share in our melody; and that good brother was so full of his noble scheme, and his song, and my rum, that he never noticed her baby voice; and her quick light figure was out of his sight, from the corner of his boozing. Therefore I managed to get her away, and send her for a good walk with Bunny, to look for water-cress at Bruwys Well; for I thought it wiser to keep that Perkins

ignorant of her whereabouts ; and Bunny could be trusted now to see to any one anywhere.

Off went the heavy one very gravely, and the light one full of antics, even in front of the cottages singing "Pankydillo" (which hit her fancy), so that I feared some disrepute, at such a thing going forth from our house upon a Sabbath evening. I tried to frown, but she made me laugh by turning round and clapping her knee, exactly as she had seen me do ; and it seemed the best thing to go back out of sight, ere neighbours got the key to it. Little she guessed that the fate of her life was dancing in the balance, and that her own lightsome play had turned it, whether for good or evil.

How could I let such a spring of life, such a mischievous innocence, and thoroughly earnest devotion to play, sink and be quenched by a formal old Methodist in the iron district ? Sker House was dull enough for dry bones : but there at least she had the sands, and sea, and shells, and rabbits, and wild-fowl : nor any one to terrify her with religious terrors—which to the young are worst of all—unless it were a ghost or two of wicked abbots repenting. Whereas I knew what an old compunctious Methodist is, who has made some money, and devotes his last years to "the service of Jehovah." Even £20,000 could not make it up to her.

Therefore I shook Master Perkins up, for he really had been a little too free, and was going to sleep with his spectacles stuck for a corkscrew into another bottle, and I made him understand that his plan was a great deal too crooked for me, and that the sooner he went to seek Hepzibah (who was prophesying on a stool for pickling pork, down at Betsy Matthew's), and to prepare for his midnight service, with a strong Revival rising, the better chance he would have of escaping my now rapidly-growing desire to afford him total immersion (which is the only salvation of one highly respectable lot of them) in the well of John the Baptist. Hezekiah dreaded water so much that this hint was enough for him; and off he set in a tipsy shamble, to lie down on the sand-hills, ere he came face to face with the prophetess. When I had put things a little aright, and brushed up the hearth to a bit of fire (to warm the milk for the little ones), and by opening doors and windows sweetened all the place with summer flowing in and nestling round the relics of the sunset, and when the neighbours' chairs (whereon the very old men had been sitting for their Sunday evening) creaked, as if carried in and dusted for another Sunday, and there was not one child left (except a bad child by the well, whose loose mind was astray with stars, and

took no heed of supper-time), then the two best children in the village, neighbourhood, or county, hand-in-hand came to my door. They were wonderfully silent, and they stole (each in her own manner) just a little glimpse at me, to feel how my temper lay; then they looked at one another, to exchange opinions on that all-important matter. They knew they had been out too late, and had frightened Granny a little perhaps, and therefore now had angered him. And in their simple way, they thought it wiser not to broach the question. I meant to scold them, but could not find it, when I beheld their pretty ways, within my power to do so. And lucky for them that I did not know, until next day, when too late to scold, what a dreadful mess their clothes were in. In that light I could only see their pretty faces glowing, and their bright eyes full of doubt, and their little bodies shrinking back. Also bundles of water-cress put forward to mitigate righteous wrath. I felt that I had been having my spree, and these small creatures had only had theirs. So I kissed them both, and gave them good supper, and blessed them into their little bed.

CHAPTER XLIV.

PROVIDES FOR EDUCATION.

HAVING before me several years of absence from home, if it should please the Lord so long to spare me, I now took measures for the welfare of those who would chiefly miss me. The little cottage was my own from many generations, and in a new will made by a clever man (no less than our new schoolmaster), I left it to Bunny, and all my effects, except my boat, and the sum of ten guineas, which two items, as honour demanded, were for Miss Delushy. But what is wealth without education? No more than a plummet without the line. Knowing this, I provided as follows.

A thoroughly fine new schoolmaster had arisen, as aforesaid, for the purpose of educating all our Newton children. Our good parson had brought him in, not because the old one, being challenged by the village tailor to spell the word "horse" without the

picture, proved his command of the alphabet by accomplishing it in nine different ways, all wrong (for that was entered to his credit, when the tailor failed to do the like), but because he horsed a boy and left him there for the afternoon, having fallen asleep without thrashing him. And it shows what the public confusion of mind is, that there were not three people in all the parish who could help jumbling these stories together, because each of them had a horse in it! However the poor old man had to go, and Colonel Lougher, having nothing to do with the spelling of the children, thought it so hard on his brother's part, that he made the old man his head-gardener, so as to double his wages, and enable him to sleep not half, but the whole of the afternoon.

His successor in the school had been sought out very diligently, and he could spell almost as well as Bardie could pronounce a word. But when we found that he came from a distance more than a quick man could walk in a day, and that he could not through all his forefathers (although they were quite at his finger-ends) claim so much even as intermarriage with any of our third-rate families, much less with any Llewellyns, or Hopkins, or Bevans, or even Thomases, we saw that even Parson Lougher had gone a little too far for us, and not a woman in the

place would let a bedroom to that man. However we could not bolt him out of his own schoolroom, and there he slept, contented with a pile of slates for bedstead, and of copy-books for bolster and for pillow. For a week at least he had no school, but he went to church and sang beautifully (which brought half the women over), and the children began to be such a plague, at home, before Monday morning, that eight or nine were sent back to school, as if with halters round their necks. With these he took so much kind trouble, that in three hours they learned more than the parish had learned for a generation; so much that they could not keep it down when they went home for dinner. In the afternoon there were twenty pupils, and by the end of the week three dozen. But how could they prove him to their parents qualified for a bedroom?

Upon the strength of my present position, and unrivalled experience, I found it my duty to come to the fore, and take the command of the householders. And knowing of course what a waste of time it is to reason with anybody, I seized the bull by the horns, and offered Master Roger Berkrolles the occupancy of my cottage upon most liberal conditions. "That is to say for rent per quarter, one sea-snail, and per annum one cockleshell, to preserve the title; pro-

vided nevertheless and upon this express condition that my lawful granddaughter Bunny should be fed, alimented, sufficiently nourished, clothed, clad, apparelled, and in garments found; also taught, instructed, indoctrined, educated and perfected in every branch of useful knowledge by the said Roger Berkrolles. Item, that if a certain child of tender years, known as 'Delushy,' should at any time appear on the premises, and demand instruction, instruction of the highest order, and three slices of bread-and-butter, should be imparted to her without charge, *de die in diem*." I objected to these "dies," as being of a nasty churchyard sound; but Master Roger convinced me soon, and must have convinced a far tougher fellow, that to put our latter end out of sight and out of mind so, is a bad example and discouragement for the young ones, whose place it is to dwell on it.

A man of far coarser tone of mind than mine would be required to describe Master Roger's sense of gratitude towards me. When I do a handsome thing, I cannot bear to tell of it, nor even to receive the praise accruing from what neighbours know. "Do it, and be done with it," in all such cases is my rule; and if Roger chose to give me an inventory of goods and chattels, he can bear me out in saying that

I scorned to call a witness in to put his name to it. Business is not my strong point, and it never is with a man of largeness.

The next thing for me to see to was to get some wicked warrants quashed; which a deep ignorance of my character, and the lies of very low villains, had induced some weak or vicious magistrates to issue; so that in the sporting season (when I might have done my best), I was forced to decamp with my telescope. This has been mentioned perhaps before; but not my strong resolution to face it out, as soon as ever the sense of a strong position enabled me. No doubt they had meant to do their duty; and I forgave them altogether. There were three of them. Two names I quite forget. How can one think of such trifles at sea? But the third was one Master Anthony Stew, who had tyrannised over me dreadfully, in the times of my tribulation. Up to this man's gate I went, and rang the great bell, with my three stripes on, and a cap of fronted tapestry. Squire Anthony was about, somewhere on the premises, would my honour mind waiting while the boy went round to look for him? This maid never guessed how often she had told me my fish was bad, and what a shame it was to make them eat it up in the kitchen, or starve; and where did I hope to go

to? Neither did she recollect how she had as good as made me kiss her behind the meat-screen, when my glory began to grow for saving those drowned niggers. And yet I could not be sure that she did not know it all, and hide it all, for the joy of boasting afterwards. I understand everything, except women.

When I was shown into the drawing-room, and Mrs Stew with a curtsy went out, as if afraid to trust herself in a presence so imposing, I had a great mind to take a nip at some of the rubbish upon the table. The whole of these nick-nacks could never have paid me half what this fellow had cost me in fines, expenses, costs, and so on; without a bit of evidence from any man of character. However, I only looked at them.

When that low Anthony Stew came in, he knew me (before I could speak almost); he gave a quick glance at the table, and then without another word showed me out, in spite of all my uniform, to his dirty little justice-room. With such a man, I should think it wrong to go into his ribaldry; only he said this, at last;

"Davy, thou thief, we will withdraw them, because we cannot execute them; now thou art in Royal Service. Five there are, if I remember. Does your conscience plead to more?"

"My conscience pleads to none, your Worship. Perjured scoundrels all of them. Five was the number, I do believe. Alas! what may we come to?"

"The gallows, Dyo, the gallows, thou rogue! Thou hast had some shavings. But when thy turn comes, good Dyo, I will do thee a good turn, if I can."

"Will your Worship tell me why? I never looked for anything but the flint-edge from your Worship."

"Because thou art the only rogue I never was a match for. There, go thy way now; go thy way; or I shall be asking thee to dinner."

"Nay, your Worship, God forbid! What food have I had since breakfast-time?" And so I won the last word of him.

After this provision for my good repute, and defiance of magisterial scandal on behalf of Bunny, my next act was one of pure generosity towards an ancient enemy. Poor Sandy Macraw had a very hard fight to maintain himself and his numerous and still increasing family. Sometimes they did not taste so much as a rind of bacon for months together, but lived on barley-bread and dog-fish, or such stuff as he could not sell, with oatmeal cakes for a noble treat every other Sunday. What did I do but impart to him, under document drawn by Berkrolles, that licence to fish off and on Sker Point which my cou-

rage had well established, with authority to him and covenant by him to attack and scare all poachers; the whole to be void upon my return, if so I should think proper. And not only this, but I put him in funds to replace all his tackle, by enabling him to sell his boat. For I went so far as to lease him my own, at a moderate yearly rental, upon condition that he should keep her in thorough repair and as good as new. And for the further validity (as the lease said) of this agreement, two years' rent became due at once, and was paid from the price of the other boat. My boat went twice as fast as Sandy's, and was far more handy, so that this bargain was fair and generous, and did honour to all concerned.

The next and last thing, before starting, was to provide for poor Bardie herself. For I feared that Hezekiah, or some other unprincipled fellow, might trump up a case, and get hold of her, and sell, or by other means turn into money my little pet, to the loss of my rights, and perhaps her own undoing. Resolved as I was to stop all chances of villany of that kind, I went direct to Colonel Lougher and to Lady Bluett. Here I made the cleanest breast that ever was scooped out almost. I may declare that I kept in nothing, except about painting the boat, and one or two infinite trifles of that sort,

which it would have been a downright impertinence to dwell upon. Nevertheless Colonel Lougher said that some blame might attach to me in spite of all pure intentions.

But Lady Bluett said no, no. She would not hear of it for a moment. The only thing that surprised her was Llewellyn's thorough unselfishness, and chivalrous devotion to a child who was nothing to him. She was a bewitching little dear; no one who saw her could doubt that; still it showed a very soft side to a wonderfully gallant character, when through all modesty it appeared what womanly tenderness there had been. And this proved how entirely right her opinion had been from the very first, and what a mistake the good Colonel had made, in declining to let her even argue.

"My dear Eleanor, my dear Eleanor," cried the Colonel, with his eyes wide open, and his white hand spread to her; "I am surprised to hear you say so. But we cannot go into that question now. Llewellyn begged for my opinion. Yours, my dear (as you have proved), is of course more valuable: still I thought that it was mine——"

"To be sure it was, dear Henry. Yours is what was asked for. My rule is never to interrupt you, but to listen silently."

"To be sure, Eleanor, to be sure! And we always agree in the end, my dear. But so far as I can judge at present, Llewellyn, although with the very best meaning——"

"And a display of the greatest valour. Come, Colonel, even by his own account——"

"Yes, my dear, great valour, no doubt, coupled with very sound discretion. Yet when I come to consider the whole, I really do think that your hero might have entered more fully into these particulars about the boat. Of course, he had no motive, and it was simply an error of judgment——"

"Henry, there was no error at all. What could he do when they would not even listen to him about the name of the ship? If they would not listen about a ship, is it likely they would listen about a boat? And a very small atom of a boat! The thing is too ridiculous."

Perceiving a pause, I made my bow; for the very last thing I could desire would be to sow a controversy between the gentleman and lady, whom of all the county I esteemed the most and loved the best. And I knew that if I caused dissension in a pair so well united, each would think the less of me, when they came to make it up together. Moreover, my object was attained. Their attention was drawn to

the child again: the Colonel, as the nearest magistrate, was put in legal charge of her: I was now quit of all concealment: and Lady Bluett had promised to see to the poor thing's education, if ever she should need any.

This I hoped with all my heart that she would do, and quickly too. And indeed she was growing at such a pace after that long illness, also getting so wonderfully clever about almost everything, and full of remarks that might never strike a grown man till he thought of them, that the only way or chance I saw of taking the genius out of her, was to begin her education. Forgetting just now a good deal of my own, and being so full of artillery, I got Master Berkrolles to make the first start, and show her the way to the alphabet. Our Bunny now could spell "cat" and "dog," and could make a good shot at some other words, and enjoyed a laugh at children (head and shoulders over her) whenever they went amiss, and she from the master's face was sure of it. But Bardie had never been to school; for I thought it below her rank so much; and now I contrived for our great schoolmaster to come to my cottage, and there begin.

It must have made the very gravest man, ever cut from a block of wood, laugh to behold Master Roger,

and her. He with his natural dignity, and well-founded sense of learning, and continual craving for a perfect form of discipline; yet unable to conceal his great wonder at her ways: she on her side taking measure of him in a shy glance or two, and letting her long eyelashes fall, and crossing her feet with one shoulder towards him, for him to begin with her. He vowed that he never had such a pupil; instead of learning, she wanted to know the reason why of everything. Why had A two legs and a girdle, while B had two stomachs and no leg at all? C was the moon, from the shape of it. It was no good to tell her that C was the cat; a cat had four legs and C had none: and as for D being a dog, she would fetch dear Dutch, if he would not believe her, and show him what a dog was like. And then perceiving how patient he was, and understanding his goodness, the poor little fatherless soul jumped up on his knee, and demanded a play with him. He did not know how to play very well, because he was an ancient bachelor; but entering into her sad luck, from knowledge of her history, he did the very best thing (as I thought) that ever had been done to her. He put her on a stool between his knees, and through the gloss of her hair he poured such very beautiful and true stories, that one could almost see her mind (like

the bud of a primrose) opening. She pushed up her little hands and tossed her thick hair out of the hearing way, and then, being absorbed in some adventures like her own almost, round she turned and laid her eyes upon his furrowed yet beaming face, and her delicate elbows on his knees, and drank in every word, with sighs, and short breath, and a tear or two.

Although, from one point of view, I did not like to be superseded so, especially in my own department, as might be said, of story-telling, yet I put small feelings away, and all the jaundice of jealousy. If I were bound to go wherever Government might order me, for the safety of our native land, and with moderate pay accruing, also with a high position, and good hopes of raising it, the least I could do was to thank the Lord for sending those two poor children a man, so wise, and accomplished, and kind-hearted, bound over to look after them. And yet I would almost as lief have committed them into the hands of Mother Jones, who could scarcely vie with me. But they promised never to forget me; and the night before I went away, I carried Bardie back to Sker, and saw that Black Evan was dying.

CHAPTER XLV.

INTRODUCES A REAL HERO.

My orders were to rejoin at Pembroke on the 10th of June, where the Alcestis lay refitting, and taking in stores for an ocean-cruise. Of course I was punctual to the day, and carried with me a fine recruit, Master Rodney Bluett. I received not only minute directions from his lady-mother, but also a tidy little salary, to enable me to look after him. This was a lady of noble spirit, and ready to devote her son for the benefit of his country; because there was no fighting now, nor any war in prospect. Also Colonel Lougher came as far as the gate, where the griffins are, and patted his nephew's curly head; and said that although it was not quite as he himself could have wished it, he could trust the boy to be an honour to a loyal family, and to write home every now and then, for the sake of his poor mother. For his own sake also, I think the Colonel might have very truly

said; because while he was talking so, and trying to insist on duty, as the one thing needful, I could not for a moment trust my own eyes to examine him. So we all tried to say "good-bye," as if there was nothing in it.

It was a very long "good-bye," even longer than we could by any stretch have dreamed of. Two or three years was the utmost that we then looked forward to: but I tell you simple truth, in saying that not one of us had the chance of seeing England, much less any part of Wales, for a shorter period than seven years and two months added. You may doubt me, and say "Pooh, pooh! that was your fault;" and so on. But you would be wholly wrong; and from the Admiralty records our Captain could prove it thoroughly. And what is much clearer than all, do you think that Captain Drake Bampfylde would have been seven years, or even seven days away, without sight of his beautiful lady, Isabel Carey, if it could have been managed otherwise?

It was a mixture of bad luck. I can explain a good deal of it, but not all the ins and outs. We were ordered here, and ordered there, and then sometimes receiving three contradictions of everything. Until we should scarcely have been surprised at receiving signal, "H.M.S. Alcestis to the moon; to wait for orders."

And if we had received that signal, I believe we should have tried it, being by this time the best-trained and finest ship's company in the world. We had ceased to be a receiving-ship, as soon as the war was over, and now were what they begin to call—though it sounds against the grain to me—an "Experimental Ship." And the Lord knows that we made experiments enough to drown, or blow up, or blow arms off, every man borne on our blessed books. They placed me at the head of it all, until the others were up to it; and a more uneasy or ticklish time I never have known, before or since. Over and over again I expected to go up to the sky almost; and you may pretty well conceive how frequent was my uneasiness. Nevertheless I still held on; and Government had to pay for it.

In four years' time the old frigate began to be knocked almost to pieces; and we made up our minds to be ordered home, and set our memories at work upon all who were likely to meet us, if still in the land of the living. While at Halifax thinking thus, and looking forward to Christmas-time among our own families, a spick and span new frigate came, of the loveliest lines we had ever seen, and standing-gear the most elegant. She took our eyes so much at once, and she sat the water so, that there was not a

man of us able to think of anything else till all hands piped down. This was the Thetis, if you please, taken from the Crappos in the very last action of the war, a 46-gun frigate, but larger than an English 60-gun ship. The French shipbuilders are better than ours, but their riggers not to be compared; which is the reason perhaps why they always shoot at our rigging instead of our hulls. At any rate, having been well overhauled, and thoroughly refitted at Chatham, and rigged anew from step to truck, she presented an appearance of most tempting character.

It was a trick of the Naval Board to keep us together, and it succeeded. Those gentlemen knew what we were by this time, the very best ship's company to be found in all the service; and as there were signs already of some mischief brewing, their desire was still to keep together such a piece of discipline. My humble name had been brought forward many times with approval, but without any effect so far upon wages or position. Now, however, my Lords had found it expedient to remember me, and David Llewellyn was appointed master's mate to the Thetis, if he should think fit to join her; for the whole after our long service was a matter of volunteering.

There was not a man of us dared to leave Captain Drake Bampfylde shabbily. We turned over to the

Thetis, in a body, with him; and the crew that had manned her from England took the old Alcestis home again. And junior Lieutenant Bluett, now a fine young fellow, walked the quarter-deck of the Thetis, so that you should have seen him. But first and foremost was to see our great Captain Drake; as ready as if he were always looking out for an enemy's ship from the foretop. He walked a little lame, on account of the piece the shark took out of him; nevertheless we had not a man to equal him for activity. I remember once when a violent gale caught us on the banks of Newfoundland, and the sky came down upon us black as any thunder-cloud. The wind grew on us so towards nightfall, that after taking in reef after reef, the orders were to make all snug, send down the topgallant-masts, and lie-to under close-reefed main-topsail, and fore-topmast staysail. Captain Drake was himself on deck, as he always was in time of danger, and through the roar of the gale his orders came as clear as a bell almost, from the mouth of his speaking-trumpet. "Main-top men, to station! Close reef the main-topsail. Mr Bluett, clew up, clew up. There is not a moment to lose, my men. Spit to your hands and stick like pitch. What! are you afraid then, all of you?"

For the sail was lashing about like thunder, having

broken from the quarter-gasket, and when the men came to the topsail-yard they durst not go upon it. Then a black squall struck them with blinding rain, and they scarce could see one another's faces, till a cheery voice came from the end of the yard, "Hold on, my lads—hold on there! You seem so skeery of this job, I will do it for you." "'Tis the devil himself!" cried old Ben Bower, captain of the main-top; "let him fly, let him fly, my lads!" "It is our Captain," said I, who was coming slowly up to see to it, myself prepared to do the job, and shame all those young fellows; "skulk below, you jelly-pots, and leave it to me and the Captain." "A cheer for the Captain, a cheer for the Captain!" they cried, before I could follow them, and a score of men stood against the sky, in the black pitch of the hurricane, as if it were a review almost. For they guessed what the Captain must have done, and it made a hero of each of them. While they came slowly up the ratlins, he clomb the rigging like a cat, and before they got to the lubber's hole he was at the topmasthead, whence he slid down by the topping-lift to the very end of the mainyard. Such a thing done in a furious gale, and the sea going mountains high almost, beat even my experience of what British captains are up to. After that, if he had cried, "Make sail to"—Heligo-

land, with no landing to it—there was not a man of us but would have touched his hat, and said, "Ay, ay, sir!"

And now we first met Captain Nelson in command of the Boreas, a poor little frigate; we could have sunk her as easily as we outsailed her. But as senior to Captain Drake, he at once assumed command of us; although it was not in our instructions to be at his disposal. The Americans then were carrying on with the privileges of British subjects, in trading with the Leeward Islands; although they had cast off our authority in a most uncourteous, and I might say headstrong manner. Captain Nelson could never put up with the presumptuous manners of this race, and he felt bitterly how feeble had been our behaviour to them. These are people who will always lead the whole world, if they can; counting it honour to depart from and get over old ideas. And now they were doing a snug bit of roguery with the Leeward Islands, pretending to have British bottoms, while at bottom Yankees.

Nelson set his face against it; and whenever he set his face, his hand came quickly afterwards. We soon cut up that bit of smuggling, although the Governor of the Islands was himself against us. Captain

Nelson's orders were to enforce the Navigation Act; and we did it thoroughly.

Ever so many times I met him, as he now came to and fro; and he took the barge-tiller out of my hand, at least a dozen times, I think. For he never could bear that another man should seem to do his work for him, any more than he could bear to see a thing done badly. Not that he found fault with my steering (which was better than his own, no doubt), but that he wanted to steer himself. And he never could sit a boat quietly, from his perpetual ups and downs, and longing to do something. He knew my name; he knew every one's name; he called me "Old Dyo," continually, because the men had caught it up; and in my position, I could not perceive what right he had to do so. I had him on my lap, I won't say fifty times, but at least fifteen: for he never had sea-legs at all when a heavy sea was running: and I never thought it any honour, but cherished some hopes of a shilling, or so. As for appearance, at first sight he struck me as rather grotesque-looking than imposing, in spite of his full-laced uniform, and the broad flaps of his waistcoat. His hair, moreover, was drawn away from his forehead, and tied in a lanky tail, leaving exposed, in all its force, rather a sad face, pale and thin, and with the nose somewhat lop-sided.

Also the shoulders badly shaped, and the body set up anyhow; and the whole arrangement of his frame nervous, more than muscular.

In spite of all this, any man who knows the faces of men, and their true meaning, could not fail to perceive at once that here was no common mortal. The vigour and spirit of his eyes were such that they not only seemed to be looking through whatever lay before them, but to have distinct perception of a larger distance, and eagerness to deal with it. And the whole expression of his face told of powerful impatience, and a longing for great deeds, dashed with melancholy. The entire crew of his ship, I was told, were altogether wrapped up in him, and would give their lives for him without thought; and there was not one of them but was mad with our Government for being at peace, and barring Captain Nelson from the exploits he was pining for. One of them struck at me with an oar, when I said how puny Nelson was, compared with our Drake Bampfylde, and only the strong sense of my position enabled me to put up with it. And what I said was all the time the very truest of the true; and that was why it hurt them so. We being now the finest and smartest frigate in the service, looked down upon that tub of a Boreas, and her waddle-footed crew, and her pale, pig-tailed com-

mander, with a power of ignominy which they were not pleased with. And all the time we were at their orders, and they took care to let us know it! We would have fought them with pleasure, if the rules of the service allowed it.

Enough of that uncomfortable discontent and soreness. The hardest point is for a very great man to begin to set forth his greatness. We could not, at the moment, see why Horatio Nelson should thus sweep off with the lead so. But after he had once established what he was, and what he meant, there was no more jealousy. To this I shall come in its proper place; I am only now picking up crumbs, as it were, and chewing small jobs honourably.

But against one thing I must guard. Our Captain Drake was never for a moment jealous of Captain Nelson. It was one of the things that annoyed us most, when we looked down on the Boreas, and would gladly have had a good turn with those fellows who assumed such airs to us, to find that our beloved Captain was as full of Nelson as the worst of the Boreasses. And one of our men who went on strongly, took six dozen, and no mistake, and acknowledged how well he deserved it. That is the way to do things, and makes all of us one family.

It is time for me now to crowd all sail for Spithead,

as we did at last. Seven round years and two months were gone since I had seen old Cymru, and I could fill seven thousand pages with our whole adventures. But none of them bore much on my tale, and nobody cares for my adventures, since I ceased to be young and handsome; and sometimes I almost thought (in spite of all experience) that I had better have gone into matrimony with a young woman of moderate substance. But (as is the case with those things) when I had the chance I scorned it; not being touched in the heart by any one, and so proud of freedom. Moreover, the competition for a man amongst young women may become so lively as to make him bear away large down wind. Exactly what had happened to me in the land of Devonshire.

Three quarters of my pay had been assigned to Roger Berkrolles, under my hand and signature, for the maintenance of our Bunny (so far as the rent might not provide it), and for the general management of things, and then to accumulate. So that, after all, I had not any amazing sum to draw, remembering, too, that from time to time we had our little tastes of it. Nevertheless, when added up, I really was surprised to find that the good clerks thought it worth so much quill-chop over it. And now I had

been for several years on the pay of a petty officer (master's mate), and looking forward to be master, if he were good enough to drop off.

He was truly tough, and would never drop off; and I felt it the more because he was ten years my junior, and unseasoned. He drew half again as much as I did, though he knew that I had done all the work. He gave me two fingers to say good-bye, which is a loathsome trick to me; so I put out my thumb, which was difficult to him: and the next time I saw him, he lay dead in the cockpit of the Goliath.

In a word, I got so little after all my long endeavours to secure the British nation from its many enemies, that verily I must have fallen to the old resource again, and been compelled to ask for alms to help me home in 1790, as had happened to me in the year of grace 1759. We sailors always seem to be going either up or down so much, without seeming to know why. Perhaps it is a custom from our being on the waves so much. However, I was saved from doing such disgrace to the uniform and to my veteran aspect, and the hair by this time as white as snow, simply through the liberality of our Captain Bampfylde. For he made me an offer, both kind and handsome, though not more perhaps than might be expected, after our sailing together so long. This

was to take me home with him to Narnton Court, or the neighbourhood, according to how the land might lie, and thence to secure me a passage (which is easy enough in the summer-time) by one of the stone-boats to Newton Nottage. I felt that I might have come home in grander style than this was like to be; and yet it was better than begging my way; and scarcely any man should hope to be landed twice in all his life, at his native village from a man-of-war. Of course, if Master Rodney Bluett had still been with us, he would have seen to my return, and been proud of it; but he had been forced to leave us, having received his appointment as 3d lieutenant to the Boadicea, 74.

Therefore I travelled with Captain Drake, and made myself useful upon the road, finding his coxswain (who came with us in a miserably menial manner) utterly useless, whenever a knowledge of life and the world was demanded. And over and over again, my assistance paid my fare, I am sure of it, whether it were by coach or post. Because the great mass of seamen appear, whenever they come on shore, to enjoy a good cheating more than anything. The reason is clear enough—to wit, that having seen no rogues so long, they are happy to pay for that pleasure now.

It was said that even the Admiralty had been playing the rogue with us, stopping our letters, and our news, to keep us altogether free from any disturbances of home. At any rate, very few of us had heard a word of England, except from such old papers as we picked up in the colonies. And now, after seven years, how could we tell what to expect, or how much to fear?

CHAPTER XLVI.

AFTER SEVEN YEARS.

From Exeter to Barnstaple, we crowded sail with horses' tails, and a heavy sea of mud leaping and breaking under the forefoot of our coach. Also two boys on the horses, dressed like any admirals, one with horn on his starboard thigh, and the other with jack-boots only. It was my privilege to sit up in the foretop, as might be, with Coxswain Toms in the mizen-top, and the Captain down in the waist by himself. We made about six knots an hour perhaps; whenever we got jerks enough to keep up the swearing.

But the impatience of our Captain showed how very young he was, now at forty years of age, according to chronology, though nobody would believe it! Surely he might have waited well, after so long waiting; and if he could not chew a quid—which breeds a whole brood of patience—at any rate he had fine

pipes, and with common-sense might have kindled them. I handed him down my flint and steel, and my hat to make a job of it; but he shut up the glass, and cried, "More sail!" in a voice that almost frightened me.

It was as dark as main-top-tree holes by the time we got to Barnstaple; but we found no less than four fine lamps of sperm-oil burning, and tallow-candles here and there, in shops of spirit and enterprise. The horses were stalled, and the baggage housed in a very fine inn, looking up the street, and then the Captain told Toms and me to bouse up our jibs, while he went out. This we were only too glad to do after so much heavy rolling upon *terra firma*, as those landsmen love to call it, in spite of all earthquakes, such as killed thirty thousand Italian people, when first I took to the sea again.

But before long, Toms and I began to feel that we had no right to abandon our commander so. Here we were in a town that hardly ever saw a royal sailor, and could not be supposed to know for a moment what his duties were, or even to take a proper pride in seeing him borne harmless. And here was our Captain gone out in the dark, with his cocked-hat on, and his gold lace shining wherever a tallow candle hung; also with a pleasant walk as if he were

full of prize-money; though the Evil One had so patched up a peace that we never clinked a half-penny.

When old Jerry Toms and my humble self had scarcely gone through three glasses, he said to me, and I said to him, that we were carrying on too coolly in a hostile town like this. And just at this moment the Navy was down in popular estimation; for such is the public urgency, whenever we are paid for, without being killed or wounded. Therefore Jerry and I were bound to steer with a small helm, and double the watch.

We beat up the enemy's quarters calmly, finding none to challenge us; and then we got tidings of our Captain out upon the Braunton road. Jerry was a man of valour, and I could not hang back to be far behind him; and we had been concerned in storming many savage villages. So we stormed this little town, carrying our hangers, and nobody denied us. But before we were half a mile entirely out of hearing, the mayor arose from his supper, and turned out the watch, and beat the drums, and bred such alarm that in one street there were three more people alive ere morning.

Meanwhile Jerry Toms and I shaped our course for the Braunton road, and hit it, and held on to it.

And, because no man, in strange places, knows what the air may contain for him, Jerry sang a song, and I struck chorus; with such an effect that the cows were frightened all along the hedgerows. This put us quite on our legs again; and a more deeply sober couple could not, or at any rate need not, be seen, than that which myself and Jerry were, after two miles of walking.

In this manner, steering free, yet full of responsibility, we doubled the last point of the road, where it fetches round to Narnton Court. And here we lay to, and held council, out of the tide of the road, and in what seemed to be a lime-kiln.

The coxswain wanted to board the house, and demand our Captain out of it; we had carried all public opinion thus, and the right thing was to go on with it. But I told him very strongly (so that he put down his collar from his ears to listen) that no doubt he was right enough upon a hundred thousand subjects, yet was gone astray in this. And if we boarded a house at night, after carrying all the town by storm, what ship had we to bear us away from the mayor and his constables to-morrow?

In this dilemma, who should appear but the Captain himself, with his head bowed down, and his walk (which was usually so brisk in spite of a trifling lame-

ness), his very walk expressing that his heart was full of sadness.

"How much longer? How much longer?" he was saying to himself, being so troubled that he did not see us in the shadow there. "My own brother to have sworn it! Will the Lord never hold His hand from scourging and from crushing me? Would that I were shot and shrouded! It is more than I can bear."

In this gloomy vein he passed us; and we looked at one another, daring not to say a word. How could a pair of petty officers think of intruding upon the troubles and private affairs of a post-captain, even though, since our ship was paid off, we could hardly be said to serve under him? "Blow me out of the mouth of a gun," cried Coxswain Toms, in a shaking voice, "if ever I was so amazed before! I would have sworn that our Skipper was not only the handsomest but the happiest man in all the service."

"Then, Jerry, I could have set you to rights. How many times have I hinted that our Skipper had something on his mind, and none of you would hearken me?"

"True for you, my lad. I remember, now you come to speak of it. But we paid no heed; because you looked so devilish knowing, and would go no

further. Old Dyo, I beg your pardon now; there is good stuff in you, friend Dyo—thoroughly good stuff in you."

"I should rather think there was," I replied, perhaps a little drily, for he ought to have known it long ago: "Jerry, I could tell you things that would burst the tar of your pig-tail. Nevertheless, I will abstain, being undervalued so. Ho, shipmate! Haul your wind, and hail! I am blessed if it isn't old Heaviside!"

Even in the dark, I knew by the walk that it was a seaman, and now my eyes were so accustomed to look out in all sorts of weather, that day or night made little difference to my sense of vision, which (as you may see hereafter) saved a British fleet, unless I do forget to tell of it.

"Heaviside is my name, sir. And I should like to know what yours may be."

"David Llewellyn." And so we met; and I squeezed his hand till he longed to dance; and I was ready to cut a caper from my depth of feeling.

I introduced him to Jerry Toms, according to strict formality; and both being versed in the rules of the service, neither would take precedence; but each of them hung back for the other fellow to pretend to it, if he dared. I saw exactly how they

stood; and being now, as master's mate, superior officer to both, I put them at their ease, by showing that we must not be too grand. Thus being all in a happy mood, and desirous to make the best of things, we could not help letting our Captain go to dwell upon his own fortunes. Not that we failed of desire to help him, but that our own business pressed.

Gunner Heaviside led us down to a little cabin set up by himself on the very brink of Tawe high-water mark, as a place of retirement when hard pressed, and unable to hold his own in the bosom of his family. You may well be surprised—for I was more, I was downright astonished—to find that this was my old ferry-boat, set up (like a dog begging) on shores, with the poop channelled into the sand, and the sides eked out with tarpaulin. A snugger berth I never saw for a quiet man to live in: and though Heaviside scorned to tell us, and we disdained to ask him, that—as I guessed from the first—was the true meaning of it. This poor fellow had been seduced—and I felt for his temptations—(when he came fresh from salt water, and our rolling ideas of women) into rapid matrimony with that sharp Nanette. He ought to have known much better; and I ought to have given him warning; but when he had made up his mind to settle, I thought it was

something solid. I gave him the names, as I may have said, of good substantial farmers' daughters, owning at least a good cow apiece from the date of their majority, also having sheets and blankets, and (as they told me many a time) picked goose-feathers enough for two. And yet he must go and throw himself away upon that Nanette so!

But when I came to hear his case, and he for a moment would not admit that it was worse than usual, or that he wanted pity more than any other men do, and scarcely knew how far he ought, or dared even, to accept it; and then at the gurgling of his pipe, fancied that he heard somebody; Jerry and I squeezed hands for a moment, and were very careful not to tantalise this poor man, with our strong-set resolution. "Give a wide berth to all womankind," was what we would have said, if we could when now it was too late for him; "failing that, stand off and on, and let the inhabitants come down, and push off their boats, and victual you."

Poor Heaviside fetched a sigh enough to upset all arrangements; for Jerry and I (good widowers both) were not likely to be damped, at the proper time for jollifying, by the troubles of a man who was meant to afford us rather a subject for rejoicing. Therefore we roused him up, and said, or at least conveyed to

him, that he must not be so sadly down upon his luck like this. And hearing that he had six children now, and was in fear of a seventh one, I was enabled to recollect more than twenty instances of excellent women who had managed six, and gone off at the seventh visitation.

This good news put such sudden spirit into my old shipmate, that he ceased for a long time to be afeared of all that his wife could do to him. He never said a word to show what his mind suggested to him, whether good or evil. Only he made me tell those cases of unmerited mercy (as he put it) such a number of times that I saw what comfort he was deriving. And then we challenged him to tell us what was going on with him.

He seemed rather shy of discussing himself, but said that he was in Sir Philip's service, as boatman, long-shoreman, and river-bailiff, also pork-salter (as a son of the brine), and watercress-picker to the family. In a word, he had no work whatever to do; as you may pretty safely conclude, when a man is compelled to go into a catalogue of his activities. This sense of ease overweighed him no doubt, and made the time hang heavily, after so much active service, so that Naval Instructor Heaviside moved about, and began to gossip, and

having no business of his own, spent his mind upon other folks'. Now, as we began to see through him, and the monotony of a fellow who is under his wife's thumb (without the frankness to acknowledge, and enlist our sympathies for this universal burden), both Jerry and I desired to hear something a little more new than this. All things are good in their way, and devised by a finely careful Providence; so that no man, whose wife is a plague to him, can fail of one blessed reflection—to wit, that things are ordered so for the benefit of his fellow-creatures.

Thus our noble Heaviside, not being satisfied with the state of things at home—especially after he had appealed to Nanette's strong sense of reason (which bore sway in the very first week of half the honeymoon gloriously), and after he had yielded slowly all his outworks of tobacco, coming down from plugs to pipes, and from pipes to paper things, without stink enough to pay for rolling, and so on in the downward course, till he would have been glad of dry sugar-canes, or the stems of "old man's beard,"—this poor but very worthy fellow gallantly surrendered, and resolved to rejoice, for the rest of his time, in his neighbours' business mainly.

Herein he found great and constant change from his own sharp troubles. Everybody was glad to see

him; and the wives who were the very hardest upon their own husbands, thought that he showed himself much too soft in the matter of Madame Heaviside. It was not his place when that subject arose, to say either "yes" or "no;" but to put aside the question, as one that cannot be debated, out of the house, with dignity. Only every one liked him the more, the moment they remembered how contagious his complaint was.

Regard this question as you will (according to lack of experience), it was much for our benefit that the Naval Instructor was henpecked. He had accumulated things, such as no man can put together, whose wife allows him to have his talk. If he may lay down the law, or even suggest for consideration, he lets out half his knowledge, and forgets the other half of it. Whereas, if all his utterance is cut short at beginning, he has a good chance to get something well condensed inside him. Thus, if you find any very close-texture and terseness in my writings, the credit is due to my dear, good wife, who never let me finish a sentence. I daresay she had trouble with me; and I must be fair to her. It takes a very different man to understand a different woman; and these things will often touch us too late, and too sadly. I gave her a beautiful funeral, to my utmost

farthing; and took her head-stone upon credit, almost before the sexton would warrant that the earth was settled.

That night my old friend Heaviside (who has led me, from like experience, into a wholly different thing) showed some little of himself again, before our whale-oil light began to splutter and bubble too violently. Our society quite renewed his hope of getting away again; especially when I explained to him that (according to my long acquaintance with law), no one could hold him accountable for any quantity of children which a Frenchwoman might happen to have. An alien, to wit, and a foreigner, worst of all a Frenchwoman, could not expect all her froggy confinements to hold good in England. He had committed a foolish and unloyal act in buckling to with an alien enemy, and he deserved to pay out for it; but I thought (and Coxswain Toms was of the same opinion) that poor Heaviside now had suffered ever so much more than even a Frenchwoman could expect of him. And we begged him to go afloat again.

He shook his head, and said that he had not invited our opinions, but to a certain extent endeavoured to be thankful for them. Yet he suggested delicately that after being so long at sea, we might have waited

for our land-legs, before we became so positive. And if we would not mind allowing him to see to his own concerns, he would gladly tell all he knew about those of other people. This appeared to me to be a perfectly fair offer; but Jerry Toms took a little offence, on account of not knowing the neighbourhood. As superior officer of the three, I insisted upon silence, especially as from old times I knew what villany might be around us. And as soon as Heaviside could descry quite clearly what tack I stood upon, he distinctly gave his pledge to be open as the day. Therefore we all filled our pipes again, and took fresh lights for them, and looked at one another, while this old chap told his story. And please to mind that he had picked up a prawn-netful of little trifles, such as I never could stoop to scoop, because he won such chances through the way the women pitied him. Only I must in ship-shape put his rambling mode of huddling things. If you please, we are now going back seven years, and more than that, to the very date of my escape from Devonshire; so as to tell you what none of us knew, until we met with Heaviside.

CHAPTER XLVII.

MISCHIEF IN A HOUSEHOLD.

It seems that no sooner did Parson Chowne discover how cleverly I had escaped him (after leaving my mark behind, in a way rather hard to put up with), than he began to cast about to win the last stroke somehow. And this, not over me alone, but over a very much greater man, who had carried me off so shamefully—that is to say, Captain Bampfylde. Heaviside was not there as yet, but with us in the Alcestis, so that he could not describe exactly the manner of Chowne's appearance. Only he heard from the people there, that never had such terror seized the house within human memory. Not that Chowne attempted any violence with any one; but that all observed his silence, and were afraid to ask him.

What was done that night between Sir Philip and the Parson, or even between the Parson and Sir

Philip's heir, the Squire (whose melancholy room that Chowne had dared to force himself into), nobody seemed to be sure, although every one craved to have better knowledge. But it was certain that Isabel Carey went to her room very early that night, and would have no Nanette for her hair; and in the morning was "not fit for any one to look at," unless it were one who loved her.

Great disturbances of this sort happen (by some law of nature), often in large households. Give me the quiet cottage, where a little row, just now and then, comes to pass, and is fought out, and lapses (when its heat is over) into very nice explanations, and women's heads laid on men's shoulders, and tears that lose their way in smiles, and reproach that melts into self-reproach. However, this was not the sort of thing that any sane person could hope for in thirty miles' distance from Master Stoyle Chowne, after once displeasing him. And what do you think Parson Chowne did now, or at least I mean soon afterwards? That night he had pressed his attentions on the beautiful young lady, so that in simple self-defence, she was forced to show her spirit. This aroused the power of darkness always lurking in him, so that his eyes shone, and his jaws met, and his forehead was very smooth. For he had a noble fore-

head; and the worse his state of mind might be, the calmer was his upper brow. After frightening poor Miss Carey, not with words, but want of them (which is a far more alarming thing, when a man encounters women), he took out his rights in the house by having an interview with Sir Philip; and no one could make any guess about what passed between them. Only it could not be kept from knowledge of the household, that Parson Chowne obtained or took admission to Squire Philip also.

Of this unhappy gentleman very little has been said, because I then knew so little. I am always the last man in the world to force myself into private things; and finding out once that I must not ask, never to ask is my rule of action, unless I know the people. However, it does not look as if Master Heaviside had been gifted with any of this rare delicacy. And thus he discovered as follows.

Squire Philip's brain was not so strong as Captain Bampfylde's. He had been very good at figures, while things went on quietly; also able to ride round and see the tenants, and deal with them, as the heir to a large estate should do. The people thought him very good: and that was about the whole of it. He never hunted, he never shot, he did not even care for fishing. A man may do without these things, if he

gets repute in other ways (especially in witchcraft), but if he cannot show good cause for sticking thus inside four walls, an English neighbourhood is apt to set him down for a milksop. And tenfold thus, if he has the means to ride the best horse, and to own the best dogs, and to wear the best breeches that are to be bought.

Squire Philip must not be regarded, however, with prejudice. He had good legs, and a very good seat, and his tailor said the same of him. Also, he took no objection to the scattering of a fox, with nothing left for his brush to sweep up, and his smell made into incense; nor was the Squire, from any point of view, or of feeling, squeamish. Nevertheless he did not give satisfaction as he should have done. He meant well, but he did not outspeak it; only because to his quiet nature that appeared so needless. And the rough, rude world undervalued him, because he did not overvalue himself. This was the man who had withdrawn, after deep affliction, into a life, or a death, of his own, abandoning hope too rapidly. He had been blessed, or cursed, by nature, with a large, soft heart; and not the flint in his brains there should be for a wholesome balance. I know the men. They are not very common; and I should like to see more of them.

This Squire Philip's hair was whiter than his father's now, they said; and his way of sitting, and of walking, growing older. No wonder, when he never took a walk, or even showed himself; rather like a woman yielding, who has lost her only child. It is not my place to defend him. All our ways are not alike. To my experience he seemed bound to grieve most about his children. For a man may always renew his wife more easily than his children. But Squire Philip's view of the matter took a different starting-point. It was the loss of his wife that thus unwisely overcame him.

Accordingly he had given orders for women alone to come near him, because they reminded him of his wife, and went all around in a flat-footed way, and gave him to see that they never would ask, yet gladly would know, his sentiments. And living thus, he must have grown a little weak of mind, as all men do, with too much of a female circle round them.

What Parson Chowne said to this poor gentleman, on the night we are speaking of, was known to none except themselves and two or three maids who listened at the door, because their duty compelled them thus to protect their master. And all of these told different stories, agreeing only upon one point; but the best of them told it, as follows. Chowne

expressed his surprise and concern at the change in his ancient friend's appearance, and said that it was enough to make him do what he often had threatened to do. Squire Philip then asked what he meant by this; and he answered in a deep, low voice, "Bring o justice the villain who, for the sake of his own advantage, has left my poor Philip childless: and with all the fair Isabel's property too! Greedy, greedy scoundrel!" They could not see the poor Squire's face, when these words came home to him; but they knew that he fell into a chair, and his voice so trembled that he could not shape his answer properly.

"Then you too think, as I have feared, as I have prayed, as I would die, rather than be forced to think. My only brother! And I have been so kind to him for years and years. That he was strong and rough, I know—but such a thing, such a thing as this——"

"He began to indulge his propensities for slaughter rather early—I think I have heard people say."

"Yes, yes, that boy at school. But this is a wholly different thing—what had my poor wife done to him?"

"Did you ever hear that Drake Bampfylde offered himself to the Princess, while you were away from home, and a little before you did?"

"I never heard anything of the kind. And I think that she would have told me."

"I rather think not. It would be a very delicate point for a lady. However, it may not be true."

"Chowne, it is true, from the way you say it. You know it to be true; and you never told me, because it prevents any further doubt. Now I see everything, everything now. Chowne, you are one of the best of men."

"I know that I am," said the Parson, calmly; "although it does not appear to be the public opinion. However, that will come right in the end. Now, my poor fellow, your wisest plan will be to leave yourself altogether to a thoroughly trustworthy man. Do you know where to find him?"

"Only in you, in you, my friend. My father will never come to see me, because—you know what I mean—because—I dared to think what is now proved true."

"Now, Philip, my old friend, you know what I am. A man who detests every kind of pretence. Even a little inclined perhaps to go too far the other way."

"Yes, yes; I have always known it. You differ from other men; and the great fault of your nature is bluntness."

"Philip, you have hit the mark. I could not have put it so well myself. My fine fellow, never smother yourself while you have such abilities."

"Alas! I have no abilities, Chowne. The whole of them went, when my good-luck went. And if any remained to me, how could I care to use them? After what you have told me too. My life is over, my life is dead."

All the maids agreed at this point, and would scorn to contradict, that poor Squire Philip fell down in a lump, and they must have run in with their bottles and so on, only that the door was locked. Moreover, they felt, and had the courage to whisper to one another, that they were a little timid of the Parson's witchcraft. There had been a girl in Sherwell parish who went into the Parson's service, and because she dared to have a sweetheart on the premises, she had orders for half an hour, before and after the moon rose, to fly up and down the river Yeo, from Sherwell Mill to Pilton Bridge; and her own mother had seen her. Therefore these maids only listened.

"All this shows a noble vein of softness in you, my good friend"—this was the next thing they could hear—"it is truly good and grand. What a happy thing to have a darling wife and two sweet children,

for the purpose of having them slain, and then in the grandeur of soul forgiving it! This is noble, this is true love! How it sets one thinking!" This was the last that the maids could hear; for after that all was whispering. Only it was spread in every street, and road, and lane around, in about twelve hours afterwards, that a warrant from Justices Chowne and Rambone, and, with consent of Philip Bampfylde, was placed in the hands of the officers of the peace for the apprehension of Captain Drake, upon a charge of murder.

When Sir Philip heard of this outrage on himself —and tenfold worse—upon their blameless lineage, he ordered his finest horse to be saddled, and put some of his army-clothes on; not his best, for fear of vaunting, but enough to know him by. Then he rode slowly up and down the narrow streets of Barnstaple, and sent for the mayor and the town-council, who tumbled out of their shops to meet him. To these he read a copy of the warrant, obtained from the head-constable, and asked, upon what information laid, such a thing had issued. Betwixt their respect for Sir Philip Bampfylde and their awe of Parson Chowne, these poor men knew not what to say, but to try to be civil to every one. Sir Philip rode home to Narnton Court, and changed his dress, and his horse as well, and thus set off for Chowne's house.

What happened there was known to none except the two parsons and the General; but every one was amazed when Chowne, in company with Parson Jack, rode into Barnstaple at full gallop, and redemanded his warrant from the head-constable, who held it, and also caused all entries and copies thereof to be destroyed and erased, as might be; and for this he condescended to assign no reason. In that last point he was consistent with his usual character; but that he should undo his own act, was so unlike himself that no one could at first believe it. Of course people said that it was pity for Sir Philip's age and character and position, that made him relent so: but others, who knew the man better, perceived that he had only acted as from the first was his intention. He knew that the Captain could not be taken, of course, for many a month to come, and he did not mean to have him taken or put upon his trial; for he knew right well that there was no chance of getting him convicted. But by issue of that warrant he had stirred up and given shape to all the suspicions now languishing, and had enabled good honest people to lay their heads together and shake them, and the boldest of them to whisper that if a common man had done this deed, or been called in question of it, the warrant would have held its ground, until he faced an impar-

tial jury of his fellow-countrymen. And, what was far more to Chowne's purpose, he had thus contrived to spread between Sir Philip and his eldest son a deadly breach, unlikely ever to be bridged across at all, and quite sure to stand wide for healing, up to the dying hour. Because it was given to all to know that this vile warrant issued upon oath of Squire Philip and by his demanding; and the father's pride would never let him ask if this were so.

Now people tried to pass this over, as they do with unpleasant matters, and to say, "let bygones go;" yet mankind will never have things smothered thus, and put away. When a game is begun, it should be played out: when a battle is fought, let it be fought out — these are principles quite as strong in the bosoms of spectators, as in our own breasts the feeling—"let us live our lives out."

But Isabel Carey's wrath would not have any reason laid near it. Her spirit was as fine and clear almost as her lovely face was, and she would not even dream that evil may get the upper hand of us.

She said to Sir Philip, "I will not have it. I will not stay in a house where such things can be said of any one. I am very nearly eighteen years old, and I will not be made a child of. You have been won-

derfully kind and good, and as dear to me as a father; but I must go away now; I must go away."

"So you shall," said poor Sir Philip; "it is the best thing that can be done. You have another guardian, more fortunate than I am; and, my dear, you shall go to him."

Then she clung to his neck, and begged and prayed him not to think of it more, only to let her stop where she was, in the home of all her happiness. But the General was worse to move than the rock of Gibraltar, whenever his honour was touched upon.

"My dear Isabel," he answered, "you are young, and I am old. You were quicker than I have been, to see what harm might come to you. That is the very thing which I am bound to save you from, my darling. I love you as if you were my own daughter; and this sad house will be, God knows, tenfold more sad without you. But it must be so, my child. You ought to be too proud to cry, when I turn you out so."

Not to dwell upon things too much—especially when grievous—Narnton Court was compelled to get on without that bright young Isabel, and the female tailors who were always coming after her, as well as the noble gallants who hankered, every now and then, for a glimpse of her beauty and property.

Isabel Carey went away to her other guardian, Lord Pomeroy, at a place where a castle of powder was; and all the old people at Narnton Court determined not to think of it; while all the young folk sobbed and cried; and take it on the average, a guinea a year was lost to them.

All this had happened for seven years now: but it was that last piece of news, no doubt, almost as much as the warrant itself, that made our Captain carry on so, when we were in the lime-kiln. Because Lord Pomeroy had forbidden Isabel to write to her lover, while in this predicament. He, on the other hand, getting no letters, without knowing why or wherefore, was too proud to send any to her.

We saw the force of this at once, especially after our own correspondence (under both mark and signature) had for years been like the wind, going where it listeth. So we resolved to stop where we were, upon receipt of rations; and Heaviside told us not to be uneasy about anything. For although he durst not invite us to his own little cottage, or rather his wife Nanette's, he stood so well in the cook's good graces that he could provide for us; so he took us into the kitchen of Narnton Court, where they made us very welcome as Captain Drake's retainers, and told us all that had happened since the departure of

Miss Isabel, between Narnton Court and Nympton. In the first place, Parson Chowne had been so satisfied with his mischief, that he spared himself time for another wedlock, taking as Mrs Chowne No. 4 a young lady of some wealth and beauty, but reputed such a shrew that nobody durst go near her. Before she had been Mrs Chowne a fortnight, her manners were so much improved that a child might contradict her; and within a month she had lost the power of frowning, but had learned to sigh. However, she was still alive, having a stronger constitution than any of the Parson's former wives.

Parson Jack had also married, and his wife was a good one; but Chowne (being out of other mischief) sowed such jealousies between them for his own enjoyment, that poor Master Rambone had taken to drink, and his wife was so driven that she almost did the thing she was accused of. Very seldom now did either of these two great parsons come to visit Sir Philip Bampfylde. Not that the latter entertained any ill-will towards Chowne for the matter of the warrant. For that he blamed his own son, the Squire, having received Chowne's version of it, and finding poor Philip too proud and moody to offer any explanation.

We had not been at Narnton Court more than a

night, before I saw the brave General; for hearing that I was in the house, and happening now to remember my name, he summoned me into his private room, to ask about the Captain, who had started off (as I felt no doubt) for the castle of Lord Pomeroy. I found Sir Philip looking of course much older from the seven years past, but as upright, and dignified, and trustful in the Lord as ever. Nevertheless he must have grown weaker, though he did his best to hide it; for at certain things I told him of his favourite son, great tears came into his eyes, and his thin lips trembled, and he was forced to turn away without finishing his sentences. Then he came back, as if ashamed of his own desire to hide no shame, and he put his flowing white hair back, and looked at me very steadily.

"Llewellyn," he said, "I trust in God. Years of trouble have taught me that. I speak to you as a friend almost, from your long acquaintance with my son, and knowledge of our story. My age will be threescore years and ten, if I live (please God) till my next birthday. But I tell you, David Llewellyn, and I beg you to mark my words, I shall not die until I have seen the whole of this mystery cleared off, the honour of my name restored, and my innocent son replaced in the good opinion of mankind."

This calm brave faith of a long-harassed man in the goodness of his Maker made me look at him with admiration and with glistening eyes; for I said to myself that with such a deep knave as Chowne at the bottom of his troubles, his confidence even in the Lord was very likely to be misplaced. And yet the very next day we made an extraordinary discovery, which went no little way to prove the soundness of the old man's faith.

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.

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